

Great Conception
OF
HUMAN LIFE:
OR,

A Summary Account of the FEAR of God,
and KEEPING his Commandments.

*Thou believest that there is one God & thou doest well: The
Devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know,
O vain Man, that Faith without Works is dead.
James ii. 19, 20.*

*Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing,
but the keeping of the Commandments of God.
1 Cor. vii. 19.*

L O N D O N:

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PREFACE.

THIS Book was drawn up in the *present Form*, at the Desire of one who would have it published without a *Name*. He apprehends it will be read more freely, without Favour or Prejudice, when the *Things written* are attended to, rather than the Person that writes them. And if Any should read with Advantage to *Themselves*, they may be more ready to put such a Book into the Hand of Others. By this means, that which is of most *universal Concern*, may be most *universally* and *unexceptionably* spread.

P R E F A C E.

Some of the best Books of practical Religion, that our Language, or perhaps any other affords, have thus made their Way. The *Author* of this Book has not that Opinion of any thing he can write, as to imagine it should meet with the Acceptance which some Treatises on the like Subject have done. But he is willing, nevertheless, to take his Lot as they did, who chose to send their most *serious Writings* into the World, without declaring from whence they came.

This is not from any Affectation in the Author to lie hid from his Acquaintance, though he is very desirous not to be known or talked of any further. They that are acquainted with him, will easily and quickly discover both his *Thoughts* and *Style*. But as he apprehends it will not render this Book less acceptable to Them, that know how much it is the Endeavour of his Life to walk

P R E F A C E.

walk according to it; so he hopes it will not need a *Name* to recommend it, to those who truly enter into the *Spirit* and *Design* of it. He desires no *other Honour* in this World, than what ariseth from his being really serviceable to the *Good* of *Mankind*, and acceptable to God.

The Design of this Treatise is, to set the whole Scheme of Christian Duty in such *Order* and *Connexion*, as may best fix and keep the several Branches of it upon our Minds; and may render the Lives of Christians more *consistent*, in practising *one* Grace or Virtue, so as not to contradict or cast Slights upon *another*.

The *Fear* of God being the Foundation and Substance of all Religion, this is carefully explained in the *full* *Scripture* Notion of it. From hence it will appear to be something worthy the continual Study and Care of the

P R E F A C E.

the wisest and best of Men, and to comprehend much more than is generally meant by People when they talk of *fearing* God.

The fulfilling the whole Law by *Love*, and doing *All* in the *Name of Christ*, (considering Faith as it is made a *Commandment*,) carry us into the right and true Practice of all *Christian Virtue*.

After which, we have placed the human, social, and divine Virtues, under one *general Precept*, that equally binds us to observe *each* of them, and to have a constant habitual Regard to them *all*. The Design of this is to prevent and cure that Disgrace which is done to Religion, by making it *wholly* to consist in the Duties of *Humanity*, as some great Advocates for Reason affect to do on one hand, whilst the Advocates for *Revelation* lay a disproportioned Stress upon the Duties of *Piety* on the other hand. Then

P R E F A C E.

Then follows a particular Account of the *main Branches*, that belong to each general Head. The *human* Virtues are first briefly explained, with the Particulars they include, both as to *Mind* and *Body*. And next, the *social* Virtues, with the special Duties that we owe to our Neighbour, in all sorts of Societies, and in all relative Capacities. The *divine* Virtues are more largely considered, because they require something more to be said for the right stating them.

But the several *Branches* of Duty under each of these Heads, are mostly set down *without Enlargements*, because it has been a Complaint of some Writings of this Nature, "That
" the principal Things have been
" lost, and quite put *out of the Mind*,
" by a too long *expatiating* upon
" them.

They

P R E F A C E.

They that are sincerely desirous to make the *Practice* of these Things the main and constant *Business* of their Lives, will find their Account in having them drawn up *thus briefly*. For by casting their Eye upon any one Head, they may, in a few Moments, comprehend their whole Duty upon it. Very few Words will be sufficient to Those, who are thoroughly disposed to conform themselves to the Commandments of God. But where a right Disposition of Heart is wanting, this Way, of barely telling what ought to be done, I am sensible will be of little use.

They that stand in need of further Explications, and Proofs, of the Rules laid down; or that need many Arguments, and Motives, to recommend them; must be referred to *other Books*, that are written more largely and professedly on the *Subjects* that peculiarly concern themselves. If

P R E F A C E

If God spare my Life, and give Opportunity, I propose to write out the *Scripture Explications* of every Virtue, and the Arguments to enforce the Practice of it, in the very *Words* of the inspired Writers.

In the mean time, perhaps, some Readers may be induced to make such Collections for themselves; and to consult other Treatises on the Heads that are here laid down. And by thus helping the Design of this Book, they will render *those Parts* of it more useful to them, that otherwise may appear only as *Tables of Contents* to something larger.

The Truth of the Matter is, that I am conscious *too little* is said on the particular Branches of Duty to our Selves, our Neighbour, and our God, for some Readers; and yet I am afraid the Whole will be thought *too large* by others.

P R E F A C E.

I do not know of *any Book* of practical Religion that was ever written in *this Method*: And yet to me it appears most natural and useful. It is clear and easy to the Apprehension; it tends gradually to improve and enlarge the Understanding; it will impress the Memory, and enable us quickly to recollect our selves upon one or other part of Religion: And by this means, the Rules of Practice will be most readily brought to the different Relations and Conditions of Life.

The last Chapter, concerning *actual Preparation for Death*, exceeds the Bounds that were intended: But the Method of considering this Point, being more distinct than usual, and suiting my present Disposition of Mind (which I must own stands much more toward a *future* Life than the *present*) I had some Difficulty to restrain myself from writing more largely

P R E F A C E.

largely on each Head. If it prove acceptable, it will need no Apology; if it should not, it is in vain to apologize for it.

Let not any serious and well-disposed Soul discourage itself, by looking upon the whole Compass of its Duty, as if it was impossible to go into all that is here laid down. For the Care about the general and shorter *Views* of Religion first, will lead you by Degrees into the particular Branches of your Duty. And no one can tell what Proportion his *Ability* bears to the Commandments of God, till he sets himself to make full and hearty Trial. Nor can any one know the *Grace* and *Help* that will be afforded him, till he gives Proof of his being in good Earnest, resolved upon the Discharge of his Duty.

He that reads this Book with a sincere Desire to avoid all *Evil*, and to practise every known Duty in
a 2 cleaving

P R E F A C E.

cleaving to that which is Good, will find it, I hope, of continual Service to him. And whenever it is so, I beg he would send up some kind and affectionate Wishes to Heaven for the Author.



The CONTENTS.

THE Mind of Man can be satisfied with nothing short of the Fear of GOD, and keeping his Commandments Page 1, to 6

C H A P. I.

The Fear of GOD and Obedience to him, should be made the first and highest Concern of Life p. 6, 7

I. *It is for this End GOD hath given us our Being, and reasonable Capacities* p. 7

How we are to glorify GOD p. 8, 9

II. *To bring us to this, is the great Design of a Mediator being set up betwixt GOD and Man* p. 10, 11, 12

III. *Our Profession of Religion, and all lower Regards to it, will avail us nothing, unless it be made our main Concern* p. 13, 14

IV. *Our coming to this, is the only way to conquer Sloth and Difficulties* p. 15 to 18

V. *This is the only way to revive decaying Piety in the World*

THE CONTENTS.

- World* p. 18 to 20
VI. *This is necessary to fit us for the heavenly State*
p. 20, 21
A brief Address to Those who are under Con-
victions of this Truth p. 22 to 25

CHAP. II.

The Fear of GOD explain'd.

- I. *It implies Knowledge of him: For otherwise we*
fear we know not what p. 26 to 32
They that know GOD will walk as always in
his Presence p. 33, 34
II. *The Fear of GOD respects him as a Punisher,*
and a GOD of Judgment p. 34, &c.
This Fear delivers from the Fear of other things,
p. 35, 36. *It teaches to depart from Evil,*
ibid. The Notion of Evil stated, p. 37, 38
Fear ought to rise in Proportion to the Kinds
and Degrees of Evil, p. 39. *Of the Words*
used in Scripture to describe the Kinds and
Degrees of Evil, viz. Transgression, Of-
fence, or Trespas, Iniquity, Sin, and Ma-
lice, or Malignity p. 40 to 44
III. *Fear has a Respect to GOD as a Rewarder*
p. 44 to 47
IV. *Religious Fear is not a Passion only, or raised by*
Fits; but a settled Frame of Mind p. 47, 48
It is, as thus stated, a thing to be desired,
p. 49, 50

CHAP. III.

Of making the Fear of GOD our main Concern, both
in Services of Religion, and in all the Circum-
stances

The CONTENTS.

- stances and Actions of Life p. 52.
- I. Of the Fear of GOD in Services of Religion, p. 53.
The Gospel is not intended to set aside Fear as before explained p. 55, 56, 57
- II. Of the Fear of GOD in every Change and Circumstance of Life p. 57 to 60
- III. The Fear of GOD must go throughout the Conduct of every Day p. 61, &c.
A View of a prosperous Sensualist for one whole Day, who has not the Fear of GOD p. 61 to 64
A View of that Man that is in the Fear of GOD all the Day long p. 64 to 67
The Scripture Motives to the Fear of GOD, p. 68 to 79

C H A P. IV.

- Of keeping GOD's Commandments; and particularly of LOVE, which is the fulfilling of the Law,* p. 71, 72
Of Love fulfilling the first Table of the Law, p. 73, 74
Of Love fulfilling the second Table p. 75, 76
An Excitement to this LOVE p. 77 to 82

C H A P. V.

- Of Faith in JESUS CHRIST as it is a Commandment added to Love* p. 83
Of doing all in the Name of the LORD JESUS, p. 84, 85. *This implies*
 1. *A doing all under the Authority of Christ,* p. 86. *As Lawgiver, 87. And as Judge, 88.*
 2. *It implies a continual Dependence on the Strength and Assistance of Christ* p. 88 to 90
 3. *We must do all with a constant Intention of his Glory, and for his Sake* p. 90 to 93
 4. *And we must look for Acceptance only thro' him* p. 93, 94
Four

THE CONTENTS.

Four Ways of considering the present Life, in which it should be by the Faith of the Son of GOD; p. 95. Mistaken Apprehensions about Faith in Christ warned against p. 95, 96

CHAP. VI.

Of doing justly, loving Mercy, and walking humbly with GOD p. 97

I. *This is shewed to Man, as he is a reasonable Creature* p. 98, 99

II. *This is what GOD hath shewed, and in complying with Him, all true Religion consists* p. 100

III. *This is for the Good of Man* p. 101, 102

IV. *These things ought never to be separated from, or opposed to one another* p. 103 to 106

CHAP. VII.

Of living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World p. 107

In order to this, we must deny Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts p. 108 to 111

SECT. I.

Of Sobriety, or of human Virtues p. 112

I. *Of Sobriety of Mind, viz. Consideration, Humility, Meekness, Contentment, Prudence, Constancy,* p. 113 to 117

II. *Of Sobriety of Body, viz. Temperance, Chastity, Diligence, Mortification.* p. 117 to 121

SECT. II.

Of living Righteously, or of social Virtues p. 122

I. *Of Justice* p. 123 to 126

II. *Of*

The CONTENTS

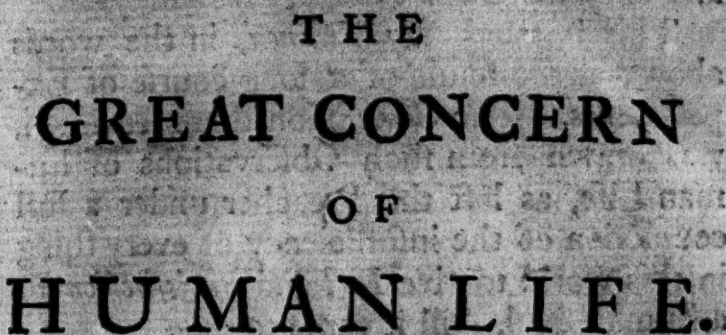
- II. Of Charity p. 127 to 130
 III. Of Courtesy, or Duties to Inferiours p. 131
 IV. Of Submission, or Duties to Superiours, 140 to 145.
 V. Of Gratitude, as it is a social Virtue p. 145 to 148
 VI. Of Peaceableness p. 148 to 150

S E C T. III.

- Of living godly : or divine Virtues* p. 131, 132
 I. Of Contemplation of God p. 153 to 157
 II. Acknowledgements of Providence, both general and special p. 157 to 163
 III. Of Faith p. 163 to 169
 IV. Of Repentance p. 169 to 170
 V. Of Adoration or Worship p. 174 to 184
 VI. Imitation of God p. 185 to 189
 VII. Of Resignation p. 189 to 194
 VIII. Of Hope and Delight in God p. 194 to 198
 IX. Of Fidelity and Trust p. 198 to 201
 X. Of waiting God's Summons, to attend him in another World p. 201 to 203

C H A P. VIII.

- Of Preparation for Death.*
A Life spent in the Practice of the foregoing things, the best Preparation p. 204 to 206
Of Death-bed Repentance p. 206 to 208
The distinct Notions of Death, call for distinct Actual Preparations p. 209
 I. Death considered as it is a leaving this World ; with Preparatives in five Particulars p. 210 to 217
 II. Death considered as it finishes our State of Trial, and seals a Character. Preparatives in five Particulars p. 217 to 224
 III. Death considered as it turns the Body to Corruption. Preparatives in five Particulars, 225 to 233
 IV. Death considered as it is the Soul's Entrance into another World, and into a new way of existing. Preparatives in four Particulars p. 233 to the End.



ECCLESIASTES xii. 13.
*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole
matter, Fear GOD, and keep his
Commandments; for this is the
whole duty of Man.*

IT is extremely affecting, to see the Life of Man wasted and thrown away, as it commonly is. The generality of the world scarce ever think of their *main Concerns*, 'till they are within the View of Death; nor do ever in good earnest propose to keep the *Commandments* of their God, 'till their *Time* for keeping them is spent and gone. But he that seriously and truly con-

2 INTRODUCTION.

siders things, will look upon it as the principal Business of his *whole Life*, to reverence and obey his God.

This is taught by *Solomon*, in the words above, as the result of a long course of Experiments. The Conclusion there set down, was drawn from such Observations of human Life, as left the Preacher under a full conviction of the insufficiency of every thing in this world to give *Rest and Satisfaction* to a human Soul, till it came to this.

Sensible *Pleasures* seem'd to be the chief Good, for one while: And never Man had more Power or Skill to improve them, and make the utmost of them, than *Solomon* had. Yet in sober Reviews, they were counted nothing better than *Madness and Folly*; so many Expedients against Thinking, or so many Ravings of Appetite and Passion.

The increase of *Riches* was what mightily took with him, another while. And no Man had greater Treasures of Silver and Gold, than he had. But he found that a *Heart* to enjoy and make a right use of *Riches*, was a distinct Gift of God, from that of *Riches* themselves. That outward Possessions was one thing, and inward Peace and Contentment was another. These were so different, as to be most commonly separated. *Riches* took away that *Sleep* which was *sweet to the labouring Man*: And were kept by the Owners thereof to their Hurt. Or they perished by

evil

INTRODUCTION. 3

evil Travel: A Phrase that signifies the Care and Labour by which the Mind is in a kind of *travel* to encrease an Estate; and yet in the midst of those very Cares and Labours, either loseth it, or loses all Comfort of it. And it was grievously painful to think that a Man must be stript of all at Death. For as he came forth of his Mother's Womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry away in his hand.

Then again, the wise Man employ'd his time in Plantations, and sumptuous Buildings; and in those things that would raise him to *Fame* and *Honour*. He set himself to dispose every thing to advantage about him, and to make the best of what he had; laying it down for a maxim, *That better is the sight of the Eye, than the wandring of the Desire*. But still, as every thing encreased *Vanity*, he was constrained to write this disgracing Question upon it, *What is Man the better?* Yea, the very Labour that he had taken under the Sun, he hated, because he should leave it to the Man that would be after him. Probably the next Possessor might be a Fool, instead of a wise Man; one that should neither have Knowledge enough to value the wise Things he had contrived, nor Care and Thought to preserve and keep them. For such to enter into a Man's Labours and Possessions when he dieth, is sufficient to cure

INTRODUCTION.

the Vanity of building, planting, and improving things for a *long futurity*.

With all this, (or after it,) he tried what could be done to satisfy his Mind by *Books*, and *Study*. He was accurately vers'd in all *natural Science*. He was skillful in the polite Way, and in *poetical Compositions*. He was well acquainted with *Morals*, and the wisest *Proverbs*. He was universally fam'd for *Politics*: And he became as famous for a *Writer*, as for a Planter, Builder, and Ruler. Yet here also, he leaves an Admonition that speaks much Disappointment. *By these* [words of the wise] *my Son be admonished: Of making many Books there is no end; and much Study, [or much reading] is a Weariness of the Flesh.*

Then is added the Conclusion of the whole matter, *That to fear God, and keep his Commandments is the whole of Man.* So it stands in the Original; and may be read, either the *whole Concern* or *whole Duty* of Man. One of our Expositors would have both taken in, as if it had been said, "This is
" that in which the whole Concernment of
" man lies, and includes all he hath to do
" in order to Happiness.

Remarkable to the same purpose are the Words of God in his Law of old. "What
" doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear
" the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways,
" and to love him, and to serve the Lord
" thy

INTRODUCTION. 5

“thy God with all thy Heart, and with all
 “thy Soul, to keep the Commandments of
 “the Lord and his Statutes. *” This also
 was the great thing taught by our *Saviour*,
 that those who enter into his Kingdom must
 “do the Will of his Father who is in Hea-
 “ven. †” He called those who are *cum-
 ber’d about many things* to consider, that *one
 thing is needful*; and they who attain to the
 Instructions and Precepts of true Religion;
 he says, “choose the Good part that shall
 “never be taken from them. ‡”

Thus we find, that both human Experi-
 ence upon Earth, and the more express and
 immediate Calls of G O D from Heaven, are
 directed to bring us to this one great and
 principal point, this most important and va-
 luable end of Life, *To fear G O D and to keep
 his Commandments.*

O that God would open the Understanding
 and Heart of every one that reads this Book,
 that he may see the moment and force of
 this Conclusion! It is what every Man must
 be brought to, or he is miserable and undone.
 The sooner therefore you give into it, the bet-
 ter will it be for you. And the more close-
 ly you adhere to it, without Breaks and In-
 terruptions, the more Advantage and Comfort
 will you find in the ways of Religion. Let true
 Religion be made the principal Concern and

* Deut. x. 12.

† Matth. vii. 21.

‡ Luke. x. 41, 42.

Business of Life, and then I am persuaded the following *Treatise* will be read both with Profit, and Delight, and will be of continual Use and Service.

C H A P. I.

Shews that we ought to make the fear of God and keeping his Commandments, our first and highest Concern.

IT is one of the greatest Difficulties in Religion, to fix upon the Minds of Men a sufficient and lasting Sense of the Importance of it. The Evidences of Religion in general are so great, that Men cannot but yield an assent to the Truth of it, when they diligently employ their thinking Powers this way. But how few are there, that carry on their Reasonings to all the points of *Practice*, which divine Truths are design'd to promote? And how many fewer still, that lay such a Stress upon a Life formed according to the Word and Will of God, as the vast Consequences of this matter do require? The most careful Explications of the Fear of God, and the best Rules of Obedience laid down, will signify little, 'till Men are brought to

and great Concern of Man.

7

to see that nothing in the world so much concerns them as the due observance of these.

It shall therefore be the whole Business of this Chapter, to shew, That there is nothing in Life so important as to *fear God, and keep his Commandments.* For the proof of which consider,

I. That it is for this very End, God hath given us our *Beings*, and our *reasonable Capacities*.

No doubt but GOD created Man, as he created all things else, for his own Glory. By joining a rational intellectual Nature with Flesh and Blood, God intended that the *Excellencies* of the spiritual Nature should appear in the Actions and Government of the Body. It is for this very end, that Men are called into the ways of Religion and Piety. "I have created him (saith God) for my Glory; "I have formed him, yea I have made him.*" These various Expressions are used, upon the occasion of God's bringing his *Sons* and *Daughters* from all Quarters of the Earth. In Christianity it is laid down as an express Rule, that "whether we eat or drink, or what-
"ever we do, we should do all to the Glory
"of God.†"

Isa. xlii. 7. Cor. x. 31. Now
Glory

Now because the true Notion of *glorifying* God seems to be seldom understood, or little minded; it may therefore be proper in the beginning of such a Discourse as this, more clearly to explain that which must be carried with us thro' all parts of Religion, and ought to predominate in every action of our Lives.

Let us distinctly fix our notion of *Glory* in general, and what it is to glorify *any one*; and then let us apply this to *God*.

Glory is the resplendence or shining forth of some Excellency. And then do we glorify another, when we declare and make manifest the Excellencies which are in him, with all that Estimation and Applause that shew we have the highest regard to them. And also, when we profess to copy after these Excellencies, and do all we can to put them on, in *our* Character and Behaviour.

According to this account, we then do all to the Glory of God, when his Perfections are celebrated and praised by us. And when we take every occasion that we can to shew those Excellencies, in what we do; in what we enjoy; and in every thing that we meet with.

But in this case, we are not to think that we can add any *new Contributions* to the Honour and Splendour of a self-sufficient infinitely perfect Being. For there cannot be infinite Perfection without reflecting an infinite
 Glory

Glory upon itself. All that our glorifying God amounts to, may be summ'd up in a few Words, thus: "It is an Endeavouring that one, or other of his Perfections, may, in every Part of Life, shew forth by our Means. And we must make mention of his Name, on all proper Occasions, ascribing the original Glory of all Excellency and Goodness, that appears in our selves or any Creature of the World, entirely unto him. And as far as in us lies, we must direct every Thing to the End which he hath appointed. To glorify God is not properly to give any thing to him. This Conceit commonly leads Men to over-value derived Excellencies; which, in many Things, is to dishonour God, instead of praising him. But it is a humble using, and shewing, of what we have received from God; taking care not to hinder the Spread of his Perfections, and his glorious Fame, by any of our Mismanagements; nor to make false Applications of Things to those Causes, or Ends, which shall obscure the first Cause, or the last and great End of all.

On the contrary, we must use our utmost Endeavours that the Excellency and Perfection of our Creator may appear, and be magnified, according to the Nature and Capacities he hath bestow'd upon us. And since he hath given us reasonable Powers,

and hath made us capable of *Laws*, and *Rules* to walk by; and since he hath told us what *Rules* and *Laws* are most agreeable to him, and will best shew the *Perfections* of an invisible *God* to this visible *World*; therefore it will follow, that to apply all our reasonable *Abilities* to understand and copy out those *Laws* and *Rules*, is to glorify our *Maker* suitably to the *Nature* and *Being* he hath given us.

From all this, it is a clear and strong Conclusion, that to answer the great *End* of our *Being* and our reasonable *Capacities*, we must acknowledge this is the *Whole* of *Man*, to fear *God* and keep his *Commandments*.

2. To bring us to this Conclusion, is the great *Design* of a *Mediator* being set up betwixt *God* and *Man*.

The whole *Tenor* of the *Gospel* plainly shews, that a *Mediator* was appointed to bring our *Race* back again unto a chosen *Subjection* to the *Laws* of our *Creator*, from whom *Man* had revolted, and to return to whom he had no *Heart* or *Power*.

The great *Business* of this *Mediator*, therefore, was to do the following *Things*;

To give the *World* a new and plain and fair Edition of those *Laws* which were *natural*, but defaced and almost out of print thro' the great *Disorders* and *Sensualities* which had prevailed amongst *Men*:

To

To assure them of Mercy upon the most honourable and moving Terms, if they would come and yield themselves to his Mediation; and so believe in him, and obey him, as that he might bring them back to God:

To remove that Terror and Difficulty, which there was in all Approaches to God:

To instruct Men in the great Doctrine of Repentance, after such a Manner as it never was published before; both as to the *Extent* of it, reaching to *all* Men every where, under all Sorts of Sins, that against the Holy Ghost being only excepted; and also in the *Efficacy* and *Power* of it, changing Hearts and Spirits, and quite altering the whole Course of the outward Actions and Behaviour:

To provide a fresh supply of Strength and supernatural Aids and Assistances, by the powerful Influences of a divine Spirit:

And finally to secure our Acceptance with God, upon our *continued* and *sincere* Endeavours to please him, tho' in many Things we come short of what his Laws demand and require from us.

These are the great Ends for which a Mediator was ordained. And that they might be effectually secured, the Son of God himself is made the Mediator. All the Offices and Institutions of the mediatorial Kingdom are contrived to serve this high Design;

namely, the bringing us to partake of the divine Nature and Excellencies after the defacing and loss of them, and again enabling us to shew them forth to the World.

The Aim and View of such an astonishing Complication of *Meries*, as those that are manifest in JESUS CHRIST, was, to engage Men to "present their Bodies living" "Sacrifices holy acceptable unto God, which" "is their reasonable Service." Not being "conformed to this World, but transformed" "by the renewing of their Minds, that they" "may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God."* It is evident enough, (let some pretended Searchers into the *Grounds of Christianity* object what they will,) that the Discovery of the great Mystery of a Mediator betwixt God and Man, is the main Scope and Design of divine Revelation, under the old Testament as well as the new. The Nature of this Mediation, and the Person of the Mediator, were gradually discover'd and described, 'till at last this Mystery, which lay under Shadows and Prophecies for many Ages, was clearly revealed and made manifest in our LORD JESUS CHRIST. So that in every Dispensation of Religion, and in the various Ways of God's discovering his Will to Men, the chief and leading Subject of all divine Revelation, was,

* Rom. xii. 1, 2.

the

the ONE MEDIATOR betwixt God and Man.

The great Work and Business of this Mediator, was described in figurative Language to be "a bruising of the Serpent's Head," and in plainer speaking, "to destroy the Works of the Devil." By which means Man was to be restored, in some Measure here on Earth, to a State of Obedience to his Maker; and presented at last in Heaven, pure and perfect, and fitted to dwell with God for ever. Thus the Scripture fully and clearly shews, to every serious and careful Reader, that the Design of God in appointing a Mediator, was to bring us all strongly into this Conclusion, *That to fear God and keep his Commandments is the whole Duty of Man.*

All those licentious Schemes, upon which Men are encouraged to hope for Salvation by CHRIST, on any other Terms, are unscriptural, and unreasonable, and can end in nothing but Confusion and Misery.

Without coming to this Conclusion, all our Profession of Religion, and lower Regards to it, will avail us nothing.

It is not saying Lord, Lord, calling upon the Name of CHRIST in Acts of Worship, or wearing his Name in a Way of Distinction from those of other Religions; nor is it a Profession to be taught by him, and to be in

Communion with any Society of Christians, that will make us truly Subjects of a Redeemer's Kingdom; if at the same time we are not brought "to do the Will of our Father who is in Heaven.†" Nothing can be said in plainer stronger Terms, than this is, in the close of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount.

For want of being brought to a peremptory Determination, in this Matter, *Religion* is taken up by halves; and other Things are minded and followed after as the principal concern of Life. God is no further feared or obey'd, than as it appears requisite to secure those Advantages in the World, which Men are principally concerned about. This is the true Reason why our Saviour bids us "strive as in an Agony*, to enter in at the strait Gate, because many shall strive to enter in and shall not be able." Many shall come under great Convictions of the Excellency and *Truth* of Religion, and may shew a vast Desire after the *Rewards* of it; but they are not willing to quit their Affections to others Things, so as to make it the great and *main Business* of their Lives to walk in the Fear of God; and therefore their striving to enter into the Gospel Kingdom, and the State of Salvation by CHRIST, proves ineffectual. They make some En-

† Math. vii. 21, 22. * *Strive as in an Agony*: Luke xiii. 24.

deavours, and perhaps it costs them some Tears, but still they give out before they have compass'd and gone through with that which they propos'd, and God requires.

4. The coming to this peremptory Conclusion, is the *only way to conquer Sloth and Difficulties* in the Discharge of our Duty.

Till our Hearts are brought to this, we are uneasy and grudging at every Thing that God hath from us. It is thought too much to give him one Day in seven, or one Hour in four and twenty, for any religious Exercise. Every pious Expence, and every Act of Charity is objected against, or done with Grumbling and Backwardness. And in short every Act of Obedience to the Will of God, is made *so much of*, and all is done with such an Irksomeness of Spirit, as makes the Services of Religion a *continual Task*. Tho' Men are not willing to quit their Hopes of Salvation, yet they hope in a very languid Manner, and there is more Difficulty, than Pleasure, in applying to the Means of Amendment and Improvement. Yea the very *hearing* what God requires of them gives them Pain, whenever the absolute Necessity of *Justice and Mercy*, and *walking humbly with their God*, (with all the Branches of Duty that each of those Heads include,) are set plainly and movingly before them.

But

But when a Heart is brought thoroughly to this Conclusion, That the whole Concern of Man lies in the Fear of God, and keeping his Commandments, then many of those Debates and Struggles cease, that before created Difficulty and Pain. Many Disorders and Corruptions are overcome, which before found out Ways of pleading for themselves. And many Duties and Acts of Obedience and Charity, become a Pleasure, which to a Mind but half persuaded were esteemed needless Burdens.

The Apostle James records it, that of a double minded Man is unstable in all his Ways.* He that has a Mind set for God and Religion one while, and then again set for the World, or for pleasing the Flesh another while, cannot fail of making great Difficulties and Uneasinesses to himself. He must needs act in a very unsettled Manner. But let a Man be brought to one fixed Conclusion, and then his Way becomes more plain, before him, and his Work more easy to him. That which a Man thoroughly determines within himself, is more regularly minded, and resolutely pursued. Thus we are to understand that of our Saviour; If thine Eye be single, thy whole Body shall be full of Light: But if thine Eye be evil, thy whole Body shall be full

* James i. 8.

“ of Darkness. No Man can serve two Masters.* ” —

It must be confess'd, that Difficulties may remain for some Time, after a Mind is brought to full Conviction that Religion is its main Concern; and, upon some extraordinary Assaults of Temptation, the Difficulty may return, and perhaps it may be harder than ever to hold fast this Conclusion, That the whole of Man lies in the Fear of God and Obedience to him: But still it is a Difficulty that will wear off. And even while it continues, the Hardship in this Case will appear much less, than the Difficulty and Danger of departing from the ways of God. For it must be the extremest Folly and Maduess, to refuse Labour and Difficulty there, where we are going from such Labours to Joys and Rewards†; and at the same Time to run into Pains and Hazards, where we go from those Pains to everlasting Punishment.

The more stedfast and determin'd we are, the more will all Difficulties lessen and wear away. St. *Austin* in his Confession acknowledges, that he was long in a fluctuating State: His dallying with Sin carried him to and fro, till at last coming to a thorough Determination of Mind by the Grace of God, and the pow-

* Math. vi. 22.

† Non potest non extremæ esse dementiæ, ibi nolle potius laborare, ubi a labore itur ad mercedem, quam ubi a labore itur ad supplicium.

erful Effects of his Word, he was brought to a *Consistency* in his Resolutions and Behaviour. Hereupon he quickly found a *Sweetness*, in giving up those things that used to be *sweet* to him: * And things which before he was afraid to lose, he could now part with *joyfully*. How strongly does this plead for our coming heartily and resolvedly into this Matter, That to fear God and keep his Commandments is the whole Concern and Business of Man?

5. Another Argument to bring us warmly into this Conclusion is, that it is the *only way to revive decaying Piety in the World*.

What can you mention that *deadens* the Hearts of those, who are walking in the ways of GOD, or that *discredits* those ways in the Esteem of others, so much as the setting up earthly Concerns above those of Religion? What is there in all the World that does so much raise and invigorate a good Man's Spirit, and draw the Attention of those about him, as an acting suitably to this Conviction, that serious Piety is the principal and main Concern of Life? The more professing Christians learn to *drop* this Conclusion, or to retain it with *Coldness* and *Feebleness* of Temper, the more will secular In-

* Quam suave mihi subito factum est, carere suavitatibus nugarum? Quas amittere metus fuerat, jam dimittere Gaudium erat. Confess. Lib. IX. cap. 1.

terests prevail. But let Men of Seriousness, and Piety take heart, and encourage one another to act as those that are united in this Point, of setting the Fear of God and Obedience to him, *above* every thing else in this World; and by this Means, the Things that are *ready to die* would be *strengthened*, and the Work of God would be *revived* in the midst of these Years.

When you look to the *Affairs* of this dying Life, in which some are wholly and anxiously employ'd; and when you observe how the *Enjoyments* of Sense engross all the Time and Thoughts of others; say then, and stand to it, that to *fear* God and *keep his Commandments* is above all. The Truth and Importance of this, being heartily and steadily maintained by a *Number* of good Men, would do much to restore the Credit of Religion in *general*: And a few Instances of this Kind, would promote *particular* Conversions from the Ways of Sin, to those of Piety and Goodness, amongst your *Intimates* and Acquaintance.

This one Conclusion and Determination, always kept in Mind, and lying warm at our Hearts, would prevent "fashioning our selves according to this World." For the Generality of the World have no *just Sense* of this. It would make Men *singular*, whether they designed to be so, or not: And singularly good, so as to "do

"more than others, *" and to "shine as
 "Lights in the World. †" "Herein
 "would our heavenly Father be glorified,
 "in bearing much Fruit. ‡" So should we
 again become like the *first* Disciples of
 Christ.

This would do more than the finest Spe-
 culations, or the most learned Reasonings;
 to convince Men of the Excellency and
 Power of Religion. "For so is the
 "Will of God, that with well-doing
 "ye may put to silence the Ignorance of
 "foolish Men. ***"

Hear Christians, and consider it, that if
 "any Man will do HIS WILL, he shall
 "know of the Doctrine of Christ. ††"
 Those that will not hear or read the Word
 of God, as you do, may yet "without the
 "Word" be won by such a Conversation
 and Behaviour, as would be produc'd thro'
 your prevailing regard to it. By this kind
 of Zeal, you will also "provoke one an-
 other to love and good Works." Thus de-
 caying Piety will be revived, both intensively,
 and extensively.

6. And lastly, This will fit us for the hea-
 venly State, and Death will be safe and
 comfortable to us.

* Matth. v. 47.

† Phil. ii. 15.

‡ John xxi. 10.

*** 1 Pet. ii. 15.

†† John vii. 17.

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 1.

To make the Fear of God and keeping his Commandments our whole Concern now, will *suſe* us to that State and Place, where God is honoured and obey'd incessantly, and in the greatest Perfection. So that we shall easily pass from *one* World to the other, and have an *abundant Entrance* administered to us into that glorious Kingdom of our Lord.

This will give us hope in our Death. Yea it will gild the dark Passage with a Joy unspeakable; to think that what has been our *main* Business here, will be our *whole* and *uninterrupted* Employment, in that *Paradise* to which we are going. When this Body of Sin and Death is put off, we shall keep the Commandments of our God without sinning any more. And shall have none of the Concerns of this World, to call us off from serving our Lord, or to break our Attention to those Things which are most improving and delightful to our Souls. "Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in thro' the Gates, into the heavenly City.*" Many threatening Distempers are abroad, and from the Sickness, or Death of others, we have daily Alarms. And we have

* Revel. xxii. 14.

Warnings enough in our *selves*, to put us in mind, that it cannot be long ere it comes to our turn to sicken and die. At which awful time, there will be no Consolation like this, of having made the Fear of God and keeping his Commandments the main Concern of our Lives. To be able to say, "Lord remember how I have "walk'd before thee, in Truth and with a "perfect Heart; * " was the great Support of *Hezekiab*, when under a Sentence of Death. And "blessed is that Servant, "whom his Lord, when he comes, shall "find so doing. †"

I shall now close this Chapter, by earnestly requesting the Reader to turn in a while upon himself, and consider the present Posture of his *own Mind*. What are thy particular Thoughts and Purposes with respect to this grand Conclusion? Shall the Fear of God, and keeping his Commandments be the main Business of Life, or not? Will you be so wise for your own Souls, and so good to one who is spending his Time and Strength in solicitously contriving to serve you, as to let the Things here offered sink down into your Hearts? Will you from this very Day resolve upon the Practice of serious Religion?

* Isa. xxxviii. 3.

† Matth. xxiv. 46.

Perhaps

Perhaps it is a Purpose that hath long lain in your Breasts, That you would order your Affairs so, as to make Religion more your Business than ever yet you have done. Perhaps you have said many Years ago, that if you lived to such or such an Age, if it would please God to bring you into such or such Circumstances, you would then more closely apply your selves to the Matters of your God, and more thoroughly devote your selves to his Service. If this be the Case, let me engage you a while to ponder and weigh your present Temper and Disposition.

Do you find such Thoughts and Purposes are now become *stronger*, or *weaker*, than formerly they were?

If they are *weaker*, it is time to revive and strengthen them, lest they should *quite fail*, and by a little longer dallying come to nothing at all. " So think on your Ways " as to turn your Feet unto God's Testimonies; make haste and delay not to keep his Commandments. *

If your good Dispositions are become *stronger* than they were, don't delay complying with them, while you are under so *great Advantage*. It is much easier to follow the Motions of Heaven, and to fall in with a well affected Mind, than it is to

* Psal. cxix. 59, 60.

strive against the Stream, and to recover such Motions and Affections again when they are cool'd and lost.

Let not any Soul provoke the great Lord of the Vineyard, after all his Pains and Patience and Messages of Grace, yet to say over it as over the *fruitless Fig-tree*, "This so many Years have I come seeking Fruit, and finding none, cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" It may be, at this very Time the great and merciful *Intercessor* is pleading for you, "Let such a one alone *this Year* also." But if his Goodness hath no answerable Effect, then the *Intercessor* himself is represented saying, "After these further Means are tried, thou shalt cut it down.*"

The very best of those that look into such a Book as this, yet may find Reason to lament the *too low* and cold Regard they have had to the Concerns of their Souls, and an eternal World. Well would it become even such, to call in their mistaken Thoughts and wandering Affections, and to unite them in this one Point with all the Vigour and Resolution they can, "Above all Things to fear God and keep his Commandments."

Many are persuaded of the *Truth* of Religion, (as I hinted at the Beginning

* Luke xiii. 7, 9.

of this Chapter,) and think and speak well concerning the *Evidences* of it; but it is the greatest Unhappiness of our Day, that most Men have lost a Sense of the *Importance* of Religion. The Judgment of Truth, and the Conscience of what is right, do not weigh *strongly* enough with them to make outward and worldly Things give place, and stand in subordination as they ought to do. It is astonishing to me, that any Man can allow such Things as Truth and Conscience, and yet not think it the main Concern of Life to mind and follow these.

Believe it, Reader! the Hand that writes this, hath now more solemnly than ever sign'd to it; and longs to engage thee to say it for thy self, "That whatever others do, my principal Business and Concern shall be, to *fear* God and keep his Commandments."

According to this many Account of it, the Fear of God is the true thing with which we ought to do God's will; and keeping God's Commandments is the same thing with learning to do will. These are the two great Branches from which all the Rules of Duty do arise, that respect God, our Neighbour, and ourselves. By the Fear of God we are enabled to keep his

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The *Fear of GOD* explain'd, as it is the *Foundation of all holy Obedience*, and must go through the whole of *Religion*.

HAVING shewn, from several most important Considerations, where our *main Concern* lies; I am now to explain and give you some Account of the *things themselves*, that do so highly concern us. And here I propose to take a View of practical Religion, in all that is necessary to our Salvation, as far as general Rules, and the clearest Summaries of Duty laid down in Scripture, may direct our Temper and Behaviour.

The *Practice* of Religion lies in abstaining from every thing *sinful*, and doing that which is *right* and *lawful*. According to this summary Account of it, the Fear of GOD is the same thing with *ceasing to do Evil*; and keeping GOD's Commandments is the same thing with *learning to do well*. * These are the two great Branches from which all the Rules of Duty do arise, that respect GOD, our *Neighbour*, and *ourselves*. By the Fear of GOD, we *die unto Sin*: By keeping his

* Isaiah i. 16, 17.

Commandments, we live unto Righteousness. The Fear of God in one Part of Scripture, answers to *Mortification*, and taking up our Cross in another Part of Scripture: And the keeping God's Commandments, is our *Resurrection* with Christ, and living to God through him. This answers exactly to the Apostolical Summaries of Religion throughout all their Epistles, "Abhor that which is Evil; cleave to that which is Good*." It will be the Business of this Chapter, to shew What that Fear of God is that includes so great a Part of Religion, and is set so high as to be made a principal Point in Life.

To gain a right Sense of this, is more important than to gain any worldly Accomplishments or Possessions whatsoever. And yet how happy would it be for us, if we did but mind *this*, as we do some other things. If Men were but as attentive and solicitous to gain the *Fear of the Lord*, as they are to gain a *little Treasure*, it would not be denied them, nor could they long miss of it. "If thou seekest for it as Silver, and searchest for it as for hid Treasure; then shalt thou understand the Fear of the LORD, and find the Knowledge of God†." Fear taken in this high and extensive Sense, must doubtless be something vastly wiser and greater, than what is generally meant

* Rom. xii. 9.

† Prov. ii. 4. 5.

by People when they use the Expression of *fearing God*. It is something that goes much farther than the common Notion of dreading the Justice, and Sovereignty, and Terrors of the Almighty. For a truly religious Fear hath as great and tender Regards to the *Goodness* of God, as to his Judgments and Severity.

Let me therefore engage thee, Reader, to attend to the more full and distinct Explication of the Fear of God. It first lays the Foundation of all that is truly wise and good, and it goes through the whole of Religion. Thus consider'd, you will see how fit and proper a Conclusion it is, that the Fear of God should be made the main Concern of our Lives.

I. To fear God, implies a *Knowledge* of him; for otherwise we fear we know not what.

Every frightful *Fancy* and Imagination about the invisible God, may pass for the Fear of him, if there be not a sound Understanding. But frightful Fancies will be so far from beginning or promoting heavenly Wisdom, that they will be the greatest Hindrance to it, and a Disgrace of it.

To fear God aright must therefore include a certain Persuasion of his *Being*: That he is, in such a Sense as that there is none beside him,

him, neither can any be compared to him. The Maker, Ruler, Possessor, and Judge of all.

There is nothing strikes the Mind into so deep and thorough a Reverence, as an acquainting itself with that Being who could form this huge Frame of Heaven and Earth, and whose Immensity fills both. O that awful Deity! To be above me, around me, within me, and yet I have not minded him nor thought of him! Or have made little or nothing of his Presence! With what dread do I now behold so great and wise and perfect a Being! I am now as much fill'd with Wonder and Veneration, and meet with God as much in every thing, as I us'd to be fill'd with Vanity, and to see God in nothing before. This Difference a religious Fear makes, betwixt a Mind acquainting itself with God, and living ignorant of him.

And because no Fear can be wise, and regular, unless the Object of it be known to deserve all the Regard which is paid to it, therefore the Fear of God will take in every thing in the Divine Nature, which bespeaks Reverence and an habitual Awe. For this Reason, the Thoughts of the Divine Perfections are so ordered and fixed, that the Mind can never turn toward God, but such Apprehensions of him, as those which follow, are at Hand; and one or more of them are awaken'd upon every Motion of religious Fear.

God

God is an infinite Mind that knows all things, and fills all Places; a most pure and all-comprehending *Spirit*; without Beginning, without End, without Change, from everlasting to everlasting. He is not the less *real* for his being *invisible*; but as intimately present with us, as our *Souls* are with our Bodies.

He is All-sufficient, and ever blessed in himself; deriving no Glory or Felicity from another, but communicating all that Blessedness that is any where enjoyed throughout the whole Creation.

In one infinite Nature, are comprehended three *Persons*; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. A most lawful and adorable Part of that Revelation God hath made of himself, I esteem this Discovery. A Discovery fitted to excite the greatest Reverence, instead of a vain Cavilling about it, or furious and peremptory Decisions concerning it. This Account God gives of himself, does so much affect the whole Scheme of practical Religion, that neither the *Fear* which begins it, nor that which perfects it, can be right, if there be any secret Disesteem of one or other Person in the ever-blessed Trinity.

Further: There is an adorable Reverence due also to those other Perfections of God, which are communicable to his Creatures; His *Wisdom* appears in such a Manner, as to demand the highest Veneration from all

created

created Understandings. Mr. Boyle has written a Book on purpose to shew the *Veneration which Man's Intellect owes to GOD.*

His *Holiness* is studied, in the perfect Rectitude of his Nature, Works, and Ways; considering, that there is no Mistake, or Inconsistency, nor any thing unequal in the Designs or Actions of the most High. We may think of this 'till we are covered with humble Shame, and Consciousness of our innumerable Errors and Follies, both in Judgment and Practice.

His *Justice* appears as weighing all Persons and Actions, in a most equal Ballance. So that in all the Decisions of our own Hearts, tho' we may sometimes have Confidence, yet we must Fear before him, who is *greater than our Hearts*, and knows all things.

His *Power* shews itself as one that is able to execute all his Pleasure; whether it be to effect mighty things *for us*, or to bring about *strange Acts* of Judgment against us. Such a Sense of Omnipotence will fill the Mind with the most awful Apprehensions.

[The Fear of GOD and his *Goodness* we shall have Occasion to speak of more fully by and by.]

His Truth and Unchangeableness is attended to by a religious Fear, till we have a just Sense of his keeping most exactly and invariably to the Measures laid down by him, when he first settled the Nature and
Rela-

Relations of Things; as also his ever acting agreeably to the Discovery he has made thereof, in his Word.

But withal the Sovereign Liberty and Freedom of the Divine Nature must be maintain'd: So that in special Cases he may interpose specially, and freely, to the more eminent Display of one or other of his Perfections, as shall best serve the Ends of his Government, provided every thing be still consistent with the eternal Measures and Reasons of Things.

These voluntary Interposals of God, to make one People more acquainted with his Laws, and his Grace in a Mediator, than another People are, appears from the Case of the *Jews*, to lay a very just Foundation for religious Fear. So do also those other free and sovereign Acts, to make one Sinner, or one City, a greater Example of Vengeance than another; and to make one Saint, or one Church, more eminent in Gifts and Graces than another; and to make one Man more prosperous in the World, than another. All greatly serve to promote a religious Reverence, if we consider wisely of such things. For who would not fear him, that has the Right and Power of making such Distinctions whenever he pleaseth?

He that acquaints himself with these Perfections of God, as his Word directs, "shall be at Peace, and Good shall come unto him.*"

"him." To have a reverent realizing Sense of them, ever before our Eyes, will be found the main Concern of Man.

This is summ'd up in one short expressive Phrase in Scripture; namely, a *walking before God.*†

It was a fine Piece of Advice given by that eloquent *Roman*, who made it one of the best Rules of Behaviour, "That Men should always so speak and act, as if *Cato*, or *Scipio* was present with them." He would have them suppose some wise or great Man, for whom they had the most inward Respect, a continual Witness to all that ever they said or did. But had he known the true Fear of God, instead of supposing any Body present who really was not present, he would have described one wiser and greater than all the Children of Men, who *actually* beheld them, wherever they were, and whatever they were employ'd about.

Here is the highest Point of Religion; (the very Soul, and Heart, and Power of it;) to walk in all Places, and at all Times as *before God*. That is to act as those who consider they are constantly in his Presence, and under his Eye. Thus *Enoch's* Piety stands describ'd, that he "walk'd with God.‡" He behaved himself under

* Job xxii. 21.

† Psal. cxvi. 9.

‡ Gen. v. 24.

such a constant Sense of God's being with him, that he was translated to a State where God is more immediately and gloriously present without seeing Death. In like manner the Piety of *Abraham* ||, and *David*, and others stand describ'd, who "set the Lord *" always before them.* "* And when the wise Man is speaking of its being "well" with them that fear God; he immediately repeats it with this Explication, "which" *" fear before him. † "* The true Fear of God cannot be without a living and acting as those that are always *before him*. And there cannot be a just Sense of the continual Presence of such a Being, without considering his spiritual Nature, and all those Perfections to which we ought to approve our selves.

This first great Branch of religious Fear must be thoroughly studied, and ever attended to, as that which every Thing else in Religion depends upon. We must be careful to know what, and whom we fear; and then practically to set that Being *always before us*.

II. There is included in the Fear of God, a due Respect to him as a *Punisher* and a God of *Judgment*.

|| Gen. xvii. 1.

* Psal. xvi. 8.

† Eccles. viii. 12.

This sometimes fills a Heart with the greatest Terror. "My flesh (says David) trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.*" In order to drive away an undue fear of Man, and of outward Calamities, our Saviour himself sets before us the Terrors of the Almighty: "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him who after he hath killed hath Power to cast into Hell: Yea I say unto you fear him. †"

The Author to the Hebrews, would have a Sense of God's Power to punish and consume the Despisers of him, ever kept upon the Thoughts of those that worship before him. He tells them, that in order to serve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear, they ought to remember "our God is a consuming Fire. ‡" And before that, speaking of God's judging his People, he adds, "It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God. †"

Now consider well the Make of human Nature, and you will find that if this Fear of the Almighty be not duly excited and preserved in us, we shall be under the Power of Fear in some meaner Things. And because all lower Fear will debase and enslave and sink our Spirits, it is therefore of the

* Psal. cxix. 120.

† Luke xii. 5.

‡ Heb. xii. 28, 29.

† Ch. x. 31. box I *

greatest Moment and Concern to us, that a religious Dread of Punishments from God should prevail, above the Dread of any Pains or Calamities that sensible and material Things are capable of bringing upon us. Yea so far should a fixed Awe of God raise the Mind above all that is frightful to Sense, that Thunders and Lightnings and Earthquakes should not affect us so much, as a Dread of Sin and of willfully breaking the Commandments of God. For thus we are to understand that remarkable Text, where the *Israelites* are required not to fear all the Terrors of a burning Mount and a trembling Camp, at the giving of the Law, so much as *one Breach* of that Law, and despising the Authority of him that gave it. * *Moses* said unto the People, fear not, for "God is come to prove you, and that his Fear may be before your Faces, that ye sin not. *". It is therefore made one of the standing Observations and Proverbs of *Solomon*, "By the Fear of the Lord, Men depart from Evil. †". The Particulars that come under this Head of *departing from Evil*, are no where so proper to be consider'd, as in this Place. And it being one half of the Business and Concern of a good Man, to repent of every Thing that is evil, and to guard against it,

* Exod. xx. 20.

† Prov. xvi. 6.

I shall therefore shew what is included in the Notion of Evil according to the Scripture Account of it.

To this we ought to give the more diligent Heed, because God hath declared in his Word, that he will bring "Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil." * That we may avoid it therefore, the following Description of it should be thoroughly considered.

Evil is a Breach of those Laws, to which God hath connected all Happiness, and it is a throwing us into another Course and Order of Things, which hath joined Transgression and Affliction together. "Fools because of their Transgression, are afflicted. †"

Now the true Fear of God will make a Man diligently enquire, what those Breaches of the Law of Happiness are, that carry him into Ways which lead to Affliction and Misery. And he that would avoid all evil, or would repent of it as the Gospel encourageth him to do, should have a clear Notion of the following Account of Laws, ever present to his Mind.

That eternal Order and Course of Things which God hath settled, according to his own infinite Knowledge and unerring Per-

* Rom. ii. 9. † Psal. ciii. 17.

fections,

fections, is called his eternal Decree, or an *eternal Law*. This is the great and unerring *Plan* by which all Things are formed, disposed, and governed. In pursuance of this, all Things whatsoever are under some Law actually given to them by God. Those Things by which natural Agents are ruled or determined, we call *Nature's Law*.

That which bindeth reasonable Creatures, as far as by Reason they perceive themselves bound, we call the *Law of Reason*. That which obligeth by special Revelation from God, we call *divine Law*. And that which is probably gathered and inferred from Reason and Revelation, and counted by Men fit to be enjoy'd among themselves, makes up the Body of *human Laws*.

Apply these Things to the Fear of God as a Punisher, and the Matter stands thus. God hath so ordered it, that where any deviate from the Will of the Creator, by crossing those Ends for which their Nature was formed, so far that *Nature* suffers. Or where a Man falls into a Neglect of Reason, or into Courses that contradict it, so far his *Reason* will become an Accuser and Tormenter sooner or later to him. And where Men reject divine Revelation, or the express positive Commands of it, they fall under the Penalties denounced against Unbelievers,

and so

or

or Hypocrites. And if human Laws are broken, in Cases where God requires our Obedience to them, some Inconvenience and Affliction must ensue: Many Times even Death it self, or extreme Misery is the Consequence. In short every *Breach* of the Laws abovemention'd, so far as they are God's, carries us into that Settlement and Order of Things which hath Pain and Misery, more or less, connected with Disobedience. For this Reason we ought to fear the righteous Judgments of God, upon every *Act* of Disobedience; and much more when we fall into any disobedient *Course* of Actions. We should therefore set that of the *Psalmist* ever before our Eyes, "stand *in awe*, and Sin not. *"

This Fear of God as a Punisher may well *rise*, in Proportion to the Kinds and Degrees of Evil that we are drawn, or tempted to. But it does not drive or hurry a Man from one Evil to another, as a slavish and sensual Fear does; (which, to shew an Abhorrence of one Extreme, throws the Passions and Behaviour into another Extreme;) no, it teaches us equally to depart from *all evil*. The Scripture uses a Variety of Words to represent the Nature and Degrees of Evil to us.

* *Psalm*. iv. 4.

1. Every Breach of an expresse Commandment, or a positive Law, is called * *Transgression*. It is applied to the Disobedience and Fall of *Adam*; † and afterward to the breaking of those positive Commandments given to the *Jews*. ‡ According to which Sense, it is declared, “where no Law is, there is no Transgression. ||” By a Parity of Reason, every Disobedience to a revealed Law, or to a known positive Order and Institution of God, is a Transgression. And because every *Transgression* and *Disobedience* receiveth a just recompense of Reward, therefore the Fear of God will make us careful to avoid it, or speedily to repent of it, lest we should be overtaken by deserved Punishment.

2. Because every Transgression gives Offence, both to God as supreme Governor, and to all whom our Breach of the divine Order and Settlement of Things injures and afflicts, therefore the Scripture uses the Words ** *Trespases and Offences*. The Fear of God will therefore teach us to pray and

* *Παράβασις*, The Word is used in profane Writers, to denote any Thing spoken or acted in their publick Shows, which was beside the Course and Design of them. And thus whatever is beside the true Order of Things, and the Design or Will of God, in the Part he appoints us to act in this World, is a Transgression.

† Rom. v. 14. 1 Tim. ii. 14.

‡ Heb. ii. 1.

|| Rom. iv. 15.

** *Παράπτωματα*. Matth. vi. 14, 15. and other Places.

strive against the Commission of Evil, and the Judgments which attend it under this Notion of it. The giving Offence to God or Man, adds Weight to every Transgression, according to the Nature and Degree of the Offence that is given.

3. Because it is the Nature of Evil to make Men regardless whom they offend or injure, if so be they can but gratify themselves, it is therefore called *Iniquity*. This makes Men unmindful of the Rights of others, and carries them to do Things as if they were under no Law to them, and had no Sense of *Equity*.

Hence it is, that the Word * *Iniquity* is so often used in Scripture. Now because it is the Sentence of God, "depart from me all ye that work *Iniquity*; †" and the "Angels will gather out of the Kingdom of the Son of Man, them which do *Iniquity*; †" therefore the Fear of God teacheth Men to dread all Ways and Actions that are unequal, and injurious to the Rights of God, or our fellow Creatures.

4. Where Transgressions, Trespasses and Iniquities are committed knowingly, and wilfully, the Scripture brands such Evils with the Name of || *Sin*.

G

When

* Ἀνομία, ἀδικία.

† Matth. vii. 23.

† Ch. xiii. 41.

|| Ἀμαρτία. The Greek Writers distinguish betwixt παρὰ τὴν φύσιν, and ἐν τῇ φύσει, ἁμαρτία, ἁμαρτία.

When we read of *Iniquity*, *Transgression*, and *Sin*; this last Word plainly adds something to the former. Therefore *Sin* is explained by doing *perversly*, and committing *Wickedness*.* When the *Psalmist* is speaking of the Blessedness of them that are forgiven; he first mentions *Transgression*, and then *Sin*.** And those who were saved among the *Ephesians*, were before “dead in *Trespases and Sins*. †” This Word *Sin* is used plainly as a *heightning* of *Iniquity* by the Prophet *Hosea*. ‡ “They shall find none “*Iniquity* in me that were *Sin*.” The great Mercy of God to us under the Gospel, is therefore described and glorified on this Account, “that while we were *Sinners*, ||” i. e. wilful rebellious Offenders and Transgressors, “Christ died for us.” And all along the Gospel, Christ is recommended to us as a Saviour worthy to be accepted on this Account, “That he came “to save his People from *their Sins*.” And “that he is the Lamb of God that takes “away the *Sins* of the World:” And that

παρρησια, which they explain by the first Declensions or Deviations from the Law of God; and *αμαρτια* which they make to signify wilful *Sin* and Wickedness.

* 1 Kings viii. 47. ** Psal. xxxii. 1. † Eph. ii. 1.

‡ Hosea xii. 8. The Sense I have given of the Word *Sin*, we have the more Reason to fall in with, because *αμαρτια* is supposed to come from the Hebrew Word [*Mara*] that signifies to rebel, or to rise up against one.

|| Rom. v. 8.

he

he came to save the *Chief of Sinners*. * For this Reason, St. John says, † “whosoever “is born of God doth not commit Sin.” He is not a wilful impenitent Transgressor and Offender; he does not commit such Iniquity as to stand condemned under the Guilt and Power of Sin. “He cannot commit Sin [in the high and aggravated Sense of that Word] “because he is born of God.” The Principles of Grace and true Repentance, and the Fear of God, being planted in him; he cannot commit such Iniquity, nor trespass with such Enmity and Rebellion against God, as makes the Notion of Sin in Scripture. ‡

5. The consummating Degree of Evil is its ripening to *Malice* and *Malignity*.

St. Paul, after describing the wicked World as “filled with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, then “adds || *Maliciousness*.” The original Word is used in other Places for *Malice*, and *hatred of Spirit*. No State can be more terrible than that of a Scornor, and Hater of God.

To close this Head; the Fear of God as a *Punisher*, will make Men avoid every

* Matth. i. 21. John i. 29. 1 Tim. i. 15.

† 1 John iii. 9.

‡ See John ix. 16, 24, 31, 41.

|| Rom. i. 29. *Kaviv*.

Degree of Evil, because of the Affliction that stands connected with it: And it will make *lesser* Iniquities and Transgressions dreadful, because they lead to *greater*: And above all Things it will fill the Mind with Horror, to think of Being given up to a settled Enmity and *Hardness of Heart*; because this will lead to *everlasting* Punishment and *Destruction* from the *Presence* of the Lord.

In cultivating this Fear, and acting suitably to it, lies a very great and principal Part of the *Concern* of Man.

III. The Fear of God includes a due Respect to him as a *Rewarder*.

According to this View, it consists in the Apprehensions of our *Unworthiness* to receive any Blessing from him; and of the *Danger* there is, of our falling short of those great Things that are prepared for them that love God.

This is the Fear that keeps good Men humble and believing, and dependant upon God in every Thing; and is enjoined as a Duty for this very Purpose. "Because
" of Unbelief others were broken off; and
" thou standest by Faith. Be not high
" minded, but fear. *"

* Rom. xi. 20.

This Kind of Fear makes Men cautious, and diligent, and doubly active to gain what they are afraid of losing or coming short of. Thus we find it urged in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Let us therefore fear lest a Promise being left us of entering into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. †"

This Kind of Fear leads to the *All-sufficiency* of God; not daring to make any Creature our chief Good, or to expect our Happiness from any Thing but God himself. This Fear, when it prevails above other Fears, will teach us to conclude, That what God does is always *fittest* and *best* to be done; let our Apprehensions concerning a particular Matter be what they will. A Soul thus looking to God will say, "He whom I fear, can be better to me, and do more for me, than all this World: Therefore the Things which Men generally dread befalling them, are not my Dread so much as *forfeiting* the Favour and Presence of God."

This Fear of losing an Interest in such *Goodness* as that of God's, is a main Branch of Religion. It raiseth and fixeth in the Mind a most ingenuous and prevailing Concern not to *neglect*, or any wise act contrary to that Being, who is of all others most

† Heb. iv. 1.

amiable in himself, and most beneficent to us. Hence we read that the Children of *Israel* "returning to seek the Lord their God in the latter Days, shall fear the Lord and his Goodness.*" This may be understood of fearing to *lose* so much Goodness; and thereupon flying to it, and placing their whole Trust and Confidence in it. In this Fear of the Lord therefore is *Confidence* it self, yea *strong Confidence*.† This raises our Expectation of all the Comforts and Blessings that flow from such an Application to God, and Dependance upon him.

But further; This Fear of God with respect to his Rewards and Favours, will call Men off from every *particular* Thing that shall *offend* such Goodness; and from every Thing that is *ungrateful*, in our Return to it; as well as lead them to avoid those Courses that would *finally forfeit* it, and utterly disappoint the kind Designs of it. Such Fear, will produce all the Fruits of Mercy and Charity to *others*; lest we should appear unsuitable, and ungrateful, to the Love and Mercy of God manifested to our selves.

This is the Fear that perfects Holiness, and that goes with us to the very Gate of Heaven. Then also, it makes that State and Place doubly blissful to a Soul, when it finds all is safe, and knows that it shall

* Hos. iii. 5.

† Prov. xiv. 26.

no more offend against the Goodness of God, nor be in any more Danger of forfeiting it to all Eternity.

IV. It now plainly appears from the foregoing Account of religious Fear, that it is not a *Passion* raised by *Fits*, but a *Principle* and settled *Frame of Mind*.

Fear as a *Passion*, is a very slavish Thing, when it becomes predominant. It cannot fix upon God as its Object, without producing great Misery and Torment. This kind of Fear is the Flight of Nature from some Evil, that it apprehends will be very hurtful, if not quite destructive. And when it discovers an invisible God in all his Terrors, and with all his Power to destroy, it is ready to distract and consume the Spirit. A passionate fear sets the Imagination to work so violently, as to carry the Mind quite off from Truth, and Realities, to dwell upon the Representations of a dark and *disturbed Fancy*. It puts People upon saying and doing every Thing with great Eagerness, and Violence, while it prevails; but unsays, and undoes, and leaves the Spirit idle and indolent, or foolishly light and trifling as soon as the *fearful Fit* is over.

On the other Hand; Fear as it is a Principle of Religion, and as it truly and properly respects God, is far from Slavery; and

and consists in a judicious thoughtful Reverence, and well-pleased Regard to him. It consists also in a careful keeping to Truth, and to the Representations given of God in his Word, not giving up one's self to the mere Suggestions of Fancy. It implies (as before) great Care to know God, and to study the Things that are pleasing to him; and therefore the Judgment, with all the other Powers of the Soul must be employed, and not the Passion of Fear only excited, when we profess to be in the true Fear of God.

Hereupon, this judicious religious Fear becomes an active, diligent, consistent Thing; steadily pointing to the same End, and conducting us in the most careful attentive Manner to secure that End. Hence it is that every Christian is exhorted "to pass the whole Time of his sojourning on Earth in the Fear of God. *". In like Manner God directed his People of old to "learn to fear the Lord their God always. †". And a Life of Piety, in Opposition to a Course of Sin, is described by being "in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long. ||".

When, therefore, we are called to mind this as the Conclusion of the whole Matter,

* 1 Pet. i. 17. † Deut. xiv. 23. || Prov. xxiii. 17.

to fear God and keep his Commandments; and are told, that in this lies the whole Duty of Concern of Man; we must understand the Fear of God to comprehend all the foregoing Particulars. Namely, a knowing what and whom we fear; having a due Respect to God as a Punisher, and keeping our Eye also upon his great Goodness and Rewards, thro' a Mediator, dreading to forfeit or fall short of his Favour; and then getting a Sense of these Things *inwrought* upon the Heart and Spirit, that, as a Principle and settled Habit of Soul, it may go through and govern all our Aims and Actions.

According to this Account, the true Fear of God is a Thing to be *desired*; and not to be fled from, or got rid of, as one would fly from the Passion of Fear, or do all that's possible to prevent and conquer its Tyranny and Usurpation. *Nehemiah* pleads it as an Argument for God's hearing the Prayer of his Servants, "That they *desired* to fear his Name.*"

There is, I am very sensible, such a Fear of God as only respects his terrible Majesty, which oft proves the *Beginning* of Wisdom and of Religion. This is the Fear, which too many put for *all Religion*,

* *Nehem. i. 11.*

and never go farther with it all their Lives; and which therefore renders their religious Pretensions the Aversion and Dread of others. They make it consist in nothing else but the apprehension of Sufferings and Punishments coming upon them. This Fear will not be sufficient to perfect Holiness. It will not admit of our *delighting* our selves in the Lord, as in the Advances of the Christian Life we are required to do.

We must proceed from fearing the Lord and his Vengeance, to fear the Lord and his Goodness; and *that Fear* will carry us thro' all the Duties we owe either to God, or Man.

In this Light, all those Scriptures appear most elegant and affecting, that give the highest *Encomiums* of the Fear of God. "The Fear of the Lord is a *Fountain* of *Life*.* A little, with the Fear of the Lord, is *great Gain*.† The Fear of the Lord is the *Instruction* of *Wisdom*.‡ The Fear of the Lord is his *Treasure*.|| And the Lord *taketh Pleasure* in them that fear him, in that hope in his Mercy.**" A Fear joined with hope, and making one careful not to fall short of the Blessings hoped for, is the *Pleasure* of God. The Fear of God, thus explained, may well be said to have *Blessedness* and *Happiness*

* Prov. xiv. 27.

|| Isai. xxxiii. 6.

† Prov. xv. 16.

** Psal. cxlvii. 11.

‡ Prov. xv. 33.

annexed to it. "*Happy* is the Man that feareth
" alway.*" And in another Place, "*Bless-*
" *ed* is the Man that feareth the Lord, that
" delighteth greatly in his Command-
" ments.†"

To give you a View of these Command-
ments of God should be my next Work;
but the Scripture lays so much Stress upon
a truly religious Fear, that it is made the
great End of the Dispensations of Provi-
dence, the very Scope of all Ordinances, and
what belongs to every Day's Conduct in
the Christian Life. And because, thus con-
sider'd, it will more fully appear the chief
or main Concern of Man; I shall therefore,
in the next Chapter, give you an Account
of this Fear of God, as it is to be promo-
ted by every Thing we meet with, and to
go with us into all we do.

* Prov. xxviii. 14.

† Psal. cxii. 1.

CHAPTER III.

Of making the Fear of God our
main Concern, both in Services
of Religion, and in all the Cir-
cumstances and Actions of Life.

RELIGIOUS Fear and Reverence is something more *practical*, than notional. To have right Thoughts about it greatly concerns us, in order to form our Practice; but the *Use* we make of this Principle and Disposition, is the main Thing in the Christian Life. If we do not learn to join *Thoughts* and *Actions* together, as God requires; the finest Connection of Thoughts, or adding *Notions* one to another, will little avail us in the Matter of our Salvation.

That Man whose Actions readily follow the Directions of his Mind, and who endeavours with an honest Heart to make his Knowledge as useful as possible, is in a much better State toward God, than he that has the Skill to join together the best Set of Thoughts in the World, and to carry them to the largest Compass, while his Actions bear no Proportion to his thinking Capacities. He is undone for want of Application to that Connection God has appointed,

ed, betwixt Thoughts and Actions, Principles and Behaviour.

This it is, that makes the thorough good Man solicitously watchful, that pious Thoughts may always produce a suitable Conversation and Behaviour. To take Care of this Connexion, will be found at last to have been of vastly greater Importance than any Connection of Principles or Notions without this, let them appear never so learned or just.

For this Reason, our Notions of the Fear of God, in all his great and glorious Attributes or Excellencies, will not avail us, unless they are constantly and diligently carried into Practice. In this Sense it is, that the Fear of God is the main Concern of Man.

In the first Place we must be sure that a Reverence of the divine Perfections go into all the Services of Religion.

It is for this very End that God gives us his Words, and appoints it to be publicly read, that Young and Old may be taught the Fear of God, and keep it. When all Israel is
 “ come to appear before the Lord thy God,
 “ in the Place which he shall choose, thou
 “ shalt read this Law before all Israel in
 “ their hearing. Gather the People together, Men, and Women, and Children, and
 “ thy

“thy Stranger that is within thy Gates,
 “that they may hear, and that they may
 “learn and fear the Lord your God, and
 “observe to do all the Words of this
 “Law. *”

In all Acts of *Worship* and Devotion, private or publick, we must be sure to fix upon our Minds a respectful Sense of the Greatness and Perfection of God; that we may serve him as a great and glorious, a wise, holy, just, good, and faithful Being; and not as one that is to be trifled with, or deceived. We must serve him as one that is not to be put off with any Thing unworthy of him, or that would make him appear such a one as our selves. The Precept in general, upon this Head, is, “To serve the Lord with Fear. †”

When we meet in religious Assemblies, we are specially instructed, That “God is greatly to be feared in the Assembly of the Saints; and to be had in Reverence of all them that are about him. ‡” The *Psalmist* reaches this also by his own Example; “In thy Fear will I worship toward thy holy Temple. ||”

The same Reverence and Fear of God is required in the *Gospel Kingdom* and *Worship*, in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* before

* Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.

† Psal. ii. 11.

‡ Psal. lxxix. 7.

|| Psal. v. 7.

quoted.

quoted. And in the Visions of St. *John*, the Angel who is represented "flying in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, says with a loud Voice, FEAR GOD, and give GLORY to him, for the Hour of his Judgment is come; and WORSHIP him that made Heaven and Earth. *"

There is little good done by People's saying their Prayers, or attending any Part of divine Worship, if they once lose their Reverence for GOD, and an awful Regard to his Perfections.

Those Notions are most absurd and senseless, that would make the *Gospel* a Dispensation to *set aside all Fear*. It is true St. *Paul* says, "we have not received the Spirit of Bondage *again to fear*; †" but we have received a *free* and Child-like Spirit. That is, we do not come to GOD with such a Kind of Dread and Terror as they did under the Law; but with Freedom, and with new Encouragement thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon GOD as a *Father*. St. *John* also says, "That perfect Love casts out Fear. ‡" But before any Man draws a Conclusion from thence, let him consider how that Apostle explains both what he Means by *perfect Love*, and by

* Revel. xiv. 6, 7. † Rom. viii. 15. ‡ 1 John iv. 18.

Fear. His Account of perfect Love in the foregoing Verse stands thus: "Herein is our Love made perfect, that we may have Boldness in the Day of Judgment." His Account of Fear he gives us as plainly as Words can utter it, "That Fear which hath Torment in it." So that the Declaration of Fear being cast out by perfect Love, is only in other Words to say, that whosoever lives under a slavish Dread of the Day of Judgment, and the Condemnation of Hell, hath not yet attain'd that perfect Love, to which the Gospel is designed to bring us.

But now, what is there in these Places of Scripture, (or in any other that can be quoted,) to make void that awful reverential Fear of God, which shall keep us diligently attentive to our Duty? Whilst we are in a State of Trial, and Frailty, and Distance from God, it looks exceeding ill for Men to boast of such Notions in Religion, as shall help them to cast off all Fear. We may conclude concerning such, without doing them any Wrong, one of these two Things: Namely, that either they are grown bold with some Things, which they ought to fear; and so having suppressed the Fear of God in some Instances, they are led to set it aside in others: Or else, that they have never known what the Fear of God is, according to the foregoing Scripture Account

count of it, nor how it is that Christ has undertaken to *save Sinners*.

It is upon this Fear of God that the Grace of the Gospel is founded, and by this Means only the Blessings of a *reconciled State* are secured to us. "They shall be
" my People, and I will be their God: And
" I will give them one Heart, and one
" Way, [observe it,] that they may FEAR
" ME FOR EVER, for the Good of them
" and of their Children after them.*"

This is yet further strengthened by the Words that follow. "I will make an
" everlasting Covenant with them, that I will
" not turn away from them to do them good;
" but I will PUT MY FEAR in their Hearts,
" that they shall not depart from me.†" From
hence therefore, we may proceed to another
great Branch of *Practice*, into which this
Fear of God must continually be carried.

Secondly, We must be sure to reverence
the Deity, in every *Change* and *Circum-*
stance of our *Lives*.

There is one Text of Scripture that speaks
very fully concerning God's ordering the
Affairs of Men, whether they prove merci-
ful, or afflictive. "I know (saith the Royal
" Preacher) that whatsoever God doth, it

* Jer. xxxii. 38, 39.

† ver. 40.

“ shall be for ever : Nothing can be put to
 “ it, nor any Thing taken from it : And
 “ God doth it ☞ that Men should *fear be-*
 “ *fore him.* * ”

The meaning of this remarkable Text you may take as follows, “ Whatever God sees fit to appoint, it shall be according to his Appointment ; and it shall continue just for such a Time and Season as pleaseth him ; and no human Power can alter any Thing that he orders. As to the utmost Men can do, it shall abide for ever. Nothing can mend, or *put any Thing* wisely to the Orders and Disposals of God, take them throughout and according to the *Ends* proposed by God. And nothing can be *taken away*, without Prejudice, and making Things worse than God would have them. But every Thing is done in the Course of Providence so wisely, and steadily, that Men should *fear before* God : And that they should learn, by a constant practical Regard to all the divine Perfections, reverently to *submit* to the divine Will, and to make the *best* of every Thing that befalls them ; lest they should bring Reproaches and Contempt, upon one or other Attribute of God, and throw themselves into a State of Neglect or Opposition to him.

* Eccles. iii. 14.

If we are in Circumstances of *Safety*, free from all Enemies, and Fears of outward Calamities, such an *easy Condition* of Life is design'd to promote the Fear of God.
 "Only *fear the LORD*, and serve him in Truth with all your Heart: For consider how *great Things* he hath done for you.
 "But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consum'd both ye and your King.*"

If we enjoy *fruitful Seasons*, and dwell in a Land of *Plenty*, our Rule is, "to eat of our Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and the Firstlings of the Herds and Flocks, so that we may learn to *fear the Lord* our God always. †"

If we have been in Affliction and Trouble, and God has *heard our Supplications* and delivered us; we are then taught to adore him "who is great, and does wondrous Things: ‡"
 And the Prayer we are there directed to put up to him is this, "Teach me thy Way, O Lord, I will walk in thy Truth; unite my Heart to *fear thy Name*. ||"

On the other Hand: When God sends Troubles and Afflictions, we are required to "*bumble ourselves* under the mighty Hand of God, that he may exalt us in due Time.**" If Rebukes and Judgments are *before us*, this Language is put into our

* 1 Sam. xii. 24, 25.

† Deut. xiv. 23.

‡ Psal. lxxxvi. begin. and ver. 10. || ver. 11.

** 1 Pet. v. 6.

Mouths; "Thou, even thou art to be
 "feared, and who may stand in thy Sight
 "when once thou art angry?" Thou didst
 "cause Judgment to be heard from Hea-
 "ven; the Earth feared and was still, when
 "God arose to Judgment to save all the Meek
 "of the Earth.*" While some are cut off
 for their Sins, it is for this End, that "those
 "which remain may bear and fear, and hence-
 "forth commit no more any such evil.†"

When inward Terrors, or grievous Dis-
 eases are suffered to prevail, God doth this,
 "that he may withdraw Man from his Pur-
 "pose, and hide Pride from Man." Then he
 "looketh upon Men, and if any say *I have*
 "sinned, and perverted that which was right,
 "and it profited me not; he will deliver
 "his Soul from going into the Pit, and his
 "Life shall see the Light.‡"

But it is a most heinous Aggravation of
 the Impiety and Revolt of those, whose
 "Iniquities have turned away their Mer-
 "cies, and whose Sins have withholden
 "good Things from them, that they are
 "not brought to say in their Hearts, Let
 "us now fear the Lord our God. ||"

This may suffice to shew the Practice of
 Fear, and the Reverence which there ought
 to be of the divine Perfections, in the differ-
 ing Conditions of Prosperity, or Adversity.

* Psal. lxxvii. 7, 8.

† Job xxxiii. 17, 27, 28.

‡ Deut. xix. 20.

|| Jerem. v. 24, 25.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Fear of God must go into all the particular Actions, and Conduct of every Day.

This cannot be express'd better than in those Words of Solomon, "Let not thine Heart envy Sinners; But be thou in the fear of the Lord all the Day long.*" Don't envy the sinful irregular Part of the World, either in their Pursuit of worldly Things, or their Enjoyment of them. Don't envy their Manner of Life, in their Pride, Idleness, and Fulness, of Bread. Don't envy them, so as to fall in with them, in any of their corrupt Maxims, or Manners, or in imitating any Part of their vain Conversation and Behaviour.

Now the most effectual Way of forming our Lives and Actions all the Day long, according to the Fear of God, may be, to set before us the Behaviour of a Sinner who lives without this Fear, together with the Carriage of one who is truly possess'd by this Fear, from Morning to Evening.

Take a View first of the prosperous Sensualist for one whole Day, who has not the Fear of God before his Eyes.

Either he rises to some Diversion, and Drudgery, or else, the best Part of the

Day

Day is lost in sleep. The Sun shines upon this Man to little or no purpose, and God looks for his Homage and Devotion in vain. When he awakes, some useless or hurtful Projects seize his Mind; some *impure* or wicked Thoughts first employ his Imagination, whilst God is shamefully neglected by him. Yet the great Ruler of the World is very good to him, and furnishes him with many of the Conveniencies of Life, and with Variety of Ornaments, even for his outward Dress and Clothing. These he makes Use of, and prides himself in them; but still disregards the Being, who allows all to him. He adorns his Body; and perhaps pays much Respect to his own Shadow, if the Glass and his Dress do any Way sooth his Vanity. But all the while he is looking on the Image of *himself*, alas! he sees nothing of the Image of his *Maker*. Still he pays no Regard to his God.

Well: This Being yet follows him with Goodness. He goes out into the World, where Nature and his Friends smile upon him, and salute him; his fellow Creatures wait his Motions, and shew their Respect to him; but yet the ungrateful Wretch never bends a Knee to his Creator, nor consults any one Order that his LORD gives.

Perhaps he meets with some *useful* and good Men in the first publick Place to which

he goes; or he reads some Papers or Books that might furnish him with Excitements to pious, wise, and useful Actions: But the *poor Thing* goes about with Thoughts, as wild, imperfect, and fruitless, as his very Dreams. He follows Shadows, or Dogs and Brutes, and Diversions; and has a Heart for nothing but *very Vanity*.

The bounteous LORD of Heaven and Earth plentifully furnishes a Table for him. He sits down, and sees perhaps every Quarter of the World tributary to him, and both the *Indies* yielding something for his Entertainment: But yet he does not so much as pay the Tribute of a *single Acknowledgment* to that Being, whose the Earth and the Sea is, with all the Fulness thereof. He looks no higher than pleasing his Fancy, and indulging his Appetite; eats, and drinks, and (like the *Israelites* before their Golden-Calf) riseth up to play.

Now the Almighty, who in the soberer Part of the Day was neglected, in the revelling Part is blasphemed. Now the *Miscreant* will shew it, in Defiance of Heaven, that his Belly is his *God*, his corrupt Inclinations his only *Law*, and to fulfill the Lusts of the Flesh is his *chief Good*. Follow him a little further, (for infinite Mercy still bears with him) and observe his Visits, his Recreation, his Drinking, Gaming, Chambering and Wantonness; and what-
ever

ever else it is that wastes his Time, till Nature beckons to sleep to come and rescue it from such Disorders: And all this while, you will meet with nothing but the highest Affronts offered to the Long-suffering and Patience of God.

To give him up to his Retirement, how does the Sinner manage at the close of such a Day as this? He throws himself upon his Bed, and sinks into Sleep, perhaps loaden with *Excesses* that threaten Death, and loaden with *Guilt* that threatens Damnation; and yet not giving himself leave to think either of one or t'other. Nor has he a Heart, or Head, to offer one *Prayer* to God; tho' he stands ready to revenge the Abuse of his Mercy, by destroying both Soul and Body in Hell.

In some such Manner as this, he that hath no Fear of God, goes on all the Day long, and from one Day to another. Little Reason is there to *envy* such a Life as this: But great Reason to *pity* it, if it be occasion'd by Weakness and a thoughtless Temper; or to *abhor* it, if it be the Choice of hardened Wickedness.

Next; set before you, one that is in the Fear of God all the Day long. Such Contraries placed so near, will vastly recommend the good Character, and set us more against the bad one.

The

The Man, who justly reverenceth his God, when he awakes in the Morning thinks with Gratitude on the Care and Kindness of Heaven, that hath made him dwell in Safety. He rises to his Devotion; reverently addressing his Maker, and Preserver, to adore him for his *new Life*; (as he esteems his waking every Morning to be;) and entreating the divine Presence, and Direction, in the Affairs of the ensuing Day.

He spends not his Time in a needless, expensive, adorning his Body; but in consulting the Law of his God: And then goes into the World with Resolutions to practise it.

He applies himself with Diligence, and Chearfulness, to the Business that lies before him. If he has a Family, he looks to it with Prudence, and Care; inspecting and conducting both the Labours, and Manners, of all that are subject to him. He will not suffer Children or Servants to *live idly*; nor will he over-employ them, so as to hinder their minding the Concerns of their Souls.

In his Affairs abroad, he does justly, and loves Mercy; and by his Goodness, and Discretion, he procures Respect from all with whom he has to do. He is careful to slight no Advantage which Providence gives him, either for promoting his *own* Interest, and Usefulness, or that of *others*.

What Time he has to spare from his own Concerns, he cheerfully employs for the Good of particular Persons, or publick Societies, as Occasions offer.

His Meals are moderate, not luxurious. His Feasting sometimes shews him very friendly, but not extravagant. And every Mercy that comes from God, leads to him, in all the becoming Expressions of Praise and Obedience. He is decently respectful to his Fellow-Creatures; but there is always a superiour and very distinguishing Regard to his God, and a consulting his Honour in the World.

In his Recreations and Pleasures he is lively, easy, and inoffensive. His chosen Company is such, as may prove innocently diverting, or really profitable to one another. Every Part of his Day is filled up with something that may be serviceable, either to the Health of his Body, Improvement of his Mind, the bettering of his Circumstances in the World, for the helping those about him in one or more of these Things. He is pleased to do any thing that may serve the Good of his Country, the Interest of Religion, or may any Way lay a Foundation for after-comfortable Reflections.

In the Evening he retires, to think over the Passages of the Day that is gone; he sits down to think where he has offended, that

that he may ask Forgiveness, and form his Resolutions to act better for the future. And he will consider where he has been blest'd, that he may glorify his great Benefactor, and may contrive suitable Returns to all, who have been the Instruments of conveying, or securing, any Blessing to him.

Then he bows before the Throne of God, and offers his Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise to the Father of Mercies. He behaves himself in secret, as one that believes his " heavenly Father, who sees in secret, will reward him openly.

In all that passes from Morning to Evening, he is intent upon making his Heart and Words agree, and to keep his Thoughts and Actions in a proper Connection. Looking to Jesus, that amiable Pattern of exact Truth, and of going about doing Good, and at the same time a most merciful Advocate for our Iniquities and Imperfections. Thus believing in God, and believing also in Jesus Christ, he finds rest to his Soul, and with Peace can resign his Body and his senses to the soft Bands of Sleep, and can close his Eyes as one that is prepared, either for a new Day, or a new World.

Upon such a Comparison at this, betwixt a Man who lives without any just Sense of the Deity, and another Man who

is in the Fear of God *all the Day long*; we may learn how to conduct our selves, in avoiding the Evil, and practising the Good, which a *religious Fear* will teach us every Day we live. Instead of envying the careless fearless Sinner, we have *much more* to raise our Ambition, in beholding the regular useful Life of a Man that truly fears God.

I shall now close this Chapter, by briefly mentioning some of the best *Motives* and *Encouragements* that are proposed to us in Scripture, to put us upon making this Fear of God our constant and principal Concern.

In general we are assured, that God *commands* us to fear him “for our good *always*. *”

By this Means we are preserved from the most *hateful* and *destructive* Power of Sin. “The Transgression of the Wicked saith, that there is *no fear* of God before his Eyes;” for he flattereth himself in his own Eyes, “untill his Iniquity be found to be hateful. †” A Man void of religious Fear, persuades himself continually, that either he is guilty of *little* or *no* Sin; or else that he shall *escape* well enough tho’ he may practise some ill Things. Thus wanting the great Principle that should restrain, and re-

cover him from Iniquity; he goes from *one Sin*, and one *Degree* of Sin, to another; till he becomes hateful in the Sight both of God and Man. But where the Fear of God prevails, there God *pities*, and *helps*, when Men fall into Sin*; and they stand within the Reach of *everlasting Mercy*. God will *spare* such as *fear him*, and speak often one to another on that Account, even "as a Man spareth his own Son that serveth him.†"

By a religious Fear, many deserved and threatned Judgments are *prevented*, and many Calamities are *removed*. "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your Fear, and your Dread, and he shall be a Sanctuary.‡" Again; "Did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord? And the Lord repented him of the Evil which he had pronounced against him, or against them.¶"

The Fear of the Lord renders a Man truly *wise* and excellent in himself. This made *Joseph* great above his Brethren, and great in the Court of *Egypt*; "I fear God.**"

In the Book of *Job*, where *Wisdom* is described as something not to be found among all the *Treasures* of the *Earth*, nor to be

* Psal. ciii. 13, 17.

† Isai. viii. 13, 14.

** Gen. xlii. 18.

‡ Mala. iii. 16, 17.

¶ Jerem. xxvi. 19.

purchased by them *, nor is it to be discovered by those Creatures † that take their Flight the highest toward the Seat of Light and Glory; but by secret and imperceptible Methods, it is communicated by God; ‡ the whole Account is closed with that Direction that God himself gives for attaining it, and finding out the Way of Understanding: "Unto Man he said, Behold the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding." It is a greater Ornament, and will procure more Esteem and Reputation, than the most beautiful Countenance, or the most accomplished Behaviour. ¶ Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain, but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. ¶ It is really the best Way to obtain the true Profits of Life, and a satisfied Mind with them. "The Fear of the Lord enricheth to life, and he that hath it shall abide satisfied, & his Riches and Honour are said to be his Reward. ¶ To add no more, it has the covenant Promise of Peace here, and a blissful Immortality hereafter. ¶ My Covenant I was sworn with him of Life and Peace, and I gave it unto him, for the fear wherewith he

* Job xxviii. from the 12. to 19. † ver. 20. 21.

‡ ver. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. ¶ Prov. xxi. 30.

¶ Prov. xix. 23. ¶ Prov. xxi. 30. ¶ Gen. ix.

"*feared me, and was afraid before my Name. **" When the Time of the Dead comes that they shall be judged, God is praised on this Account, That "*he gives reward unto his Servants the Prophets, and to the Saints, and them that fear his Name, Small and Great. †*"

CHAP. IV.

Of keeping God's Commandments; and particularly of Love, which the Scripture saith is the *fulfilling of the Law.*

I NOW proceed to explain the other Branch of the Subject I am upon: Namely, to shew what it is to *keep the Commandments of God?* which being added to a religious Fear, makes up the main Business and Happiness of Man.

This evidently includes all the Rules of holy Obedience. And therefore cannot be justly explained without setting before you the Commandments of God in all the substantial and necessary Parts of our Duty.

* Mala. ii. 5.

† Rev. xi. 18.

I apprehend this may be done most profitably, both to impress Things upon the Memory, and to render them more easy and successful in Practice, by setting down *first* those short Summaries of what God requires, where our whole Duty is laid down in *general Terms* in Scripture: And then by giving you a View of those *particular* Branches of Duty that are most important, under some one plain and comprehensive Text.

The most general Account of the Commandments of God, is this: "*Love* is the *fulfilling of the Law.**" St. Paul there speaks of Love to our Neighbour, which is the fulfilling of all that Part of the Law that relates to him. But it must include also the true and right Love of *ourselves*: For we are to "love our Neighbour as our *selves*." And then further, if we love ourselves, and one another, in God, and for his sake, the Love of God is necessarily supposed and implied: Namely, that Love to God which is the Fulfilment of all the Commandments relating to the Deity. Thus our Saviour compriseth all the Law and the Prophets under the extensive Notion of *Love*: That is, "loving

* Rom. xiii. 10.

" God with all our Heart, and Soul,
 " and Mind, and Strength; and loving our
 " Neighbour as our selves. * "

God is Love: And all his Laws are made
 in perfect Goodness and Kindness. There-
 fore the fulfilling of them must be Love.
 Let all the Streams of Love and Goodness
 return to, and be guided by their great Foun-
 tain and Origin, and then his Command-
 ments are fulfilled. This will appear by
 applying it to both Tables of the Law.

Let Love to God be such as our Saviour
 requires, and then the first Table of the
 Law will be made good.

He that loves God with his whole Heart,
 will not bear to have any other God set be-
 fore him; no, nor to have any thing what-
 ever come into his Place and Stead.

He that loves God with all his Mind,
 (that is with all his Understanding, and
 with a Faith that realizes its Object,) look-
 ing to God as the great Parent-mind, will
 keep strictly to such Kind of Homage, and
 to such Expressions of Respect, as he himself
 hath declared are acceptable to him. He
 will not therefore endure any Images; or
 mean, and lessening Representations, of this
 invisible and infinitely perfect Being.

* Math. xiii. 37. Luke x. 27.

He that loves God with all his *Soul*; (taking the Soul for the animating Powers, or the Region of the Passions, it may be said, he whose very Life is devoted to God and whose Passions and Affections are consecrated by a divine Love;) he will not be either drawn, or provoked, to an irreverent Use of God's Name, or of any Thing whereby he makes himself known. Such a Man will keep every Power and Capacity of the Soul duly *observant* of God; and will shew a constant Veneration for him, upon every proper Occasion of appealing to him, or of turning the Thoughts toward him.

He that loves God with all his *Strength*, and outward Endeavours, will diligently observe the *Times* of religious and solemn Worship; and will attend every *Ordinance* and Institution, and every *Part* of the Service of God, with as much Care and Vigour as others do the Service and Commandments of Men, or the Affairs of this Life.

Thus you see that every Commandment of God, which respects our Duty to him, will be fulfilled by Love. And nothing can better suit that *Fear* of God, before described, than these Exercises and Proofs of *Love* to him.

In

In like Manner, Love to our *Neighbour* fulfills the *second* Table of the Law.

If People do not mean the serving and pleasing themselves *only*, when they miscall their Regards to others by the sacred Name of *Love*, they would be carried hereby to every Instance of Duty that is commanded toward their Neighbour.

Love would put upon honouring and obeying *Father* and *Mother*, our natural Parents; and good Rulers and Magistrates, our political Parents; and faithful Ministers and Pastors in the Church of God, our spiritual Parents. And a right Affection would lead us to give to every one, that respect which their Stations in the World, and their Relation to us, require and demand.

Love would prevent all *murdering* malicious Rage: And would suppress Hatreds, and hurtful Designs, in the very Rise and first Formation of them. It would put us upon doing all we can for the Preservation of *Life* in those about us, instead of doing any Thing to injure it and take it away.

True Love will detest *Adultery* and *Whoredom*, and all Acts of Uncleanness. Because they are vast Injuries to a Neighbour's House, and very mischievous to particular Persons: In that they debase and defile the Body; they create Tumult and Disorder in the

Mind, and spread a Darkness over it; and so make *both* unfit for an "Habitation" of God thro' the Spirit.

Love to others, would not suffer us to *defraud* them; or to take any Thing *unjustly*, and violently from them; or to withhold any Thing, unrighteously, that belongs to them.

Love to our Neighbour would keep from all *false witnessing*, in judicial Cases; and from all false and injurious Reports, in common Conversation. It will teach us to speak the Truth in our Hearts, both to others, and of them.

Finally: Love will not *envy* a Neighbour's Prosperity; nor so much as wish him to lie under Reproach, or in Want, or Misery. It will not allow of doing ill Things to any one, thro' Impatience and *Discontent* with our own Lot. Nor will it suffer us to *covet* any Thing from another to serve and please ourselves, by his *Loss*, and to his *Prejudice*.

Now to think of the whole Law of God, being thus fulfilled by Love, and to form our whole Conduct upon this one Point, how would it *shorten* our Work, and render it easy to keep God's Commandments! They would all of them, I say, be kept by a due Attention to this one Thing: Namely, to make it our main Study and

and Concern in Life, to gain and cherish a prevailing Goodness of Disposition, and an ardent Degree of Charity.

This, with a religious Fear as before explained, is the whole Duty and Happiness of Man.

Here therefore let us stay a while; and endeavour to get this impress'd upon our Minds; and to excite in our selves such Motions of *divine Love*, as may form us into a perfectly *obedient Frame* and Disposition to all that God requires of us.

Set this down as one of the principal and foundation Truths in Religion. — That every Law of God is contrived so as to be the Effect of Love. There is no such Thing as *meer Imposition*, in the Commands of God. There is nothing insisted upon by him, purely to demonstrate Power and Sovereignty, without Wisdom and Love.

We ought not once to imagine that any Command of God, if rightly understood, carries the least Shadow of *Envy* in it: As if he grudg'd us any Happiness which our Nature is capable of enjoying: But only would regulate all our Satisfactions and Pleasures, so as to make them most safe, continuing, and improving.

We should not look upon any Law as if it was contrived in *spight*, to declare a Resentment

sentment against our Persons for the sake of any Provocations. But consider all the Relations of Things, and the Duties resulting from thence, as compleatly settled in the first Formation of the World, when all was *very good*. And the writing out those Laws afresh, and enforcing them by all the Motives and Assistances of redeeming Love, is not to add to our Misery in having departed from them, till we shew an utter Contempt of the Remedy. The Gospel is contrived to be an Instrument of Good, and a *remedial* Law, till Men shew that they wilfully and resolutely prefer Disobedience, tho' it ends in Death, to a Repentance that leads to Life and Salvation.

The Commandments of God were all good, every way good, in the first Settlement of Things. And to *return* to them, as the Gospel has published a *new Edition* of them, with new Helps for keeping them, is nothing but the Advice of Love. It is the flowing of such Goodness toward us, as would have no Creature to be its *own* Torment, or to fall in with the Tormenting Power of *others*.

Look upon the Laws of Heaven with this View, and you will bless the sacred Book that is given by Inspiration of God; and you will bless the Dispensers of the Things contained in it, when they set every Duty in its clearest strongest Light.

10 Thus looking upon all God's Commands as Transcripts of Goodness, and Receipts for Happiness, and all publish'd with the Spirit of Love; you will soon come to have other Thoughts of the Duties enjoined by the Gospel, than those which the Passions, Corruptions, and Prejudices of the World generally give Men. You will then study them with Attention, and practise them with Pleasure. And the more you study and practise them, the more will you see of Wisdom and Love in them. 10 Then will your own Affections be enflamed, and you will know the Force and full Sense of that pathetick Exclamation of the *Psalmist*, "O how love I thy Law! it is my Meditation all the Day. *"

10 But here, we ought more especially to consider, that the Gospel hath put the fulfilling of the Law of God wholly upon Love, because of that Spirit of Love and Goodness whom Christ hath purchased and sent, to restore Souls to their *first* State of Likeness and Love to God, by a *new Creation*.

10 The Contemplation of this, made an admirable Writer † go into such a Train of Thoughts, as cannot be read without making serious practical Piety the most lovely and moving Thing in the World. Some

* Psal. cxix. 97. † *Smith's select Discourses* p. 334, 335, &c.

of his Thoughts, with a little Variation of Expression, are as follow.

All the Dispensations of God to the Sons of Men, are but the Spreadings and distended Radiations of Love. We are now told of a great and mighty SAVIOUR, who is able to *save to the utmost* all that come to God by him. We are taught, that the *cold* and *gentle Breathings* of the DIVINE SPIRIT are moving up and down in the World, to produce new Life; and to revive and quicken the Souls of Men, into a feeling Sense of a blessed Immortality. This is that mighty Spirit that effectually *teaches* the Will of God, and *enables* us to comply with it. That leads us to all ingenuous Addresses to our Maker, and chearful Obedience, and Dependence on him, through Christ. He warms our Hearts with lively Expectations of all Assistance from God, to sustain and succeed our Endeavours after Blessedness.

He shews us our Duty by the plainest Laws, and in the *directest* Way that may be; setting all in the strongest Light, and using the *shortest* Expressions. He presses us on, by his Way of revealing Things, to make *Dispatch* in our Preparations for a World of Purity and Felicity; without consulting any of the little human Arts of pleasing, or Fears of disgusting, which make many of our round-about Ways of expressing Things.

This

This divine Spirit leads us to such a cordial Entertainment of the Love and Goodness of God, as thaws the Heart that is contracted and frozen with *Self-Love*. By this Means, it dissolves out of all its Narrowness, and by a free and noble Sympathy with divine Love, yields up it self, and spreads and diffuses, as that does, into all the Expressions of a generous and universal Goodness. To do justly, and love Mercy, and walk humbly with God, becomes the very Element of such a Soul.

Then Religion thrives indeed, when, beholding the Glory and Goodness of the ever blessed Being shining out upon us in his Word, and in his Son Jesus Christ, we set ourselves to derive a Copy of that eternal Beauty upon our own Souls. When, with this View, we dare to aspire courageously to the highest Designs of Happiness, and to resolve upon the Kingdom of Heaven, whatever Violence there may be in securing it. When once we get to such a Pitch of Inclination and Affection as this is, how is the Heart enlarged to run the Way of God's Commandments! Then we may conceive of a Soul chiding it self, and saying, Why didst thou object against such a Duty, and argue against such a Restraint, as cross and severe? Thou didst not know that it was the Voice of Love. But now consider Things closely and justly,

M

and

and it will raise thee to Transport to observe,
That every Errand upon which God sends
thee, and every Bound and Limit which
his Law hath set, is ordered in the very
Perfection of Love and Kindness.

Such Thoughts as these, will stop every
Struggle, to cast off the Fear of God, or
to fly his Presence; and by the sweet Con-
straints of such infinite Love and Goodness,
whilst we are ardently endeavouring to copy
after it, we shall be led to fulfill the whole
Law.

Let this be made, therefore, the Con-
clusion of the whole Matter with us, and
the most constant Care of our Lives, To
continue in and increase *divine Love*. If
any Soul be restless, and running into dis-
orderly Courses, for want of being thus
fixed and engaged; or if any are pining and
starving for want of a Sense of this Love;
Go to God, and pray earnestly and persever-
ingly to him, that thro' the Son of his
Love his Grace may appear to you, and
you have no Reason to doubt but you shall
know the engaging saving Power of it.

of God's Commandment! Then we may
conceive of a soul chiding it self, and
saying, Why didst thou object against
such a Duty, and argue against such a
Revelation as cross and severe? Thou didst
not know that it was the Voice of Love
consider Things closely and justly.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of keeping the Commandments of
 "God, as FAITH in JESUS CHRIST
 is added to the Love of one an-
 other."

FROM the foregoing Chapter it plain-
 ly appears, that to fix and improve the
 true Notion of Love to God and Man, is
 sufficient to give us a clear and compre-
 hensive View of all God's Commands. But
 because our corrupt and disordered Natures
 cannot, of themselves, get into this State of
 Love and Goodness; therefore it is another
 grand and principal Commandment of God,
 that we should believe in the great Restorer
 and Saviour of the World. By him is
 given to us the whole Doctrine of Love
 and Grace, and by his Precepts and Exam-
 ple, we are taught the whole Practice of
 Goodness. He also sends his Spirit to trans-
 form our Minds and Hearts, by making
 them feel the active vital Power of divine
 Love.

This leads me to another Summary of
 our Duty, which ought to be continually
 present with us, and habitually to guide us
 in the Way of God's Commandments.

The *Apostle*, who is eminently stil'd the *Divine*, describes the divine Life in *two* Things. "This is his Commandment, that we believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ; and that we love one another, as he gave us Commandment."

All Honour, and Devotion, and Obedience to God, is implied in receiving his Son, and believing in his Name. And all that concerns MAN, is included in loving one another, as Christ hath now given that Commandment. But I need not add any Thing further concerning that Love, which is the fulfilling of the Law: I will now enlarge more distinctly on this additional Commandment, mentioned by St. John, To believe in the Name of Jesus Christ. This is not Matter of Theory and Notion only, it is expressly required here as a *Commandment*. And this it contains another general Rule, which, with the two former, must guide, and run thro' the whole of practical Religion. Whatsoever ye do, in Word or Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus. These are the Words of St. Paul, which exactly agree with, and strengthen the Commandment to believe, that is recorded by St. John. This Rule is of such Importance, that we can neither do our Duty to God or Man, unless we do it in the Name of Jesus Christ. accepta-

acceptably, and as we ought to do, if we are ignorant of the Meaning of it; or if we live in the Disuse and Slight of it.

One of the most rational Preachers the last Age produced, calls upon Men to consider the Text last quoted, as "the Sum of the whole Scripture: The utmost of God's revealing himself to Man in the State of Grace." He therefore speaks much, and in the highest strongest Terms that can be used, of the absolute Necessity of making continual Use of this Rule—

"To do all in the Name of Christ."

This he magnifies as "a most choice Piece of revealed Truth. It is a Matter of high Import. It is something added to the Principles of God's Creation, and transcendent thereto. It is a supplementary Provision of Grace. For Man, having lost himself, and having made void his Interest and Access to God because of his Disloyalty, is afresh warranted to make Use of a Name whereby he may gain Access.

"To do all in the Name of Christ is still a Point of most ordinary [or continual] Practice. Christ is not only to be made Use of, in some particular Cases; but always to be in Use, and in all Cases; of whatsoever we do, &c."

• Dr. Whicbroke in his Sermon upon the Mediation of Christ, being the grand Institution of God,

To

To enforce a due Regard to which, and to make us take the greater Heed to this Matter, he would have it considered, "That
 " the proper Apostacy of these later Ages
 " is the Falsification of this Truth, or de-
 " spising it, and taking little Notice of
 " it." And he would have this the rather
 to be always upon our Thoughts, "because
 " it hath been in God's Heart from the Be-
 " ginning. Whenever he was well pleased,
 " then he let drop more and more of this
 " Matter. Thus, Dr. *Whiccoote*.

There cannot therefore be a right and full Consideration of the *whole Duty of Man*, in keeping the Commandments of God, without a most solicitous and diligent Regard to this Rule, which is given *additional* to all the Laws under which we are by our Creation. This Commandment of *doing all in the Name of Christ*, must be considered as of the last Necessity under our spiritual Disorders and Apostacy. We must look to our Physician, and Restorer, in every Thing.

Among other Usages, and Senses of this Expression [*in the Name of Christ*] there are four Things that ought to be taken into the Explication of it.

1. To do all in the Name of Christ, is to do all as under *his Power and Authority*.

This

" This we learn from the Manner in which the Mediator himself speaks of his acting under God, and by his Appointment. He saith, " I am come in my *Father's Name*.*" And when the Apostle speaks as one acting under the Authority of CHRIST, he saith, " We command you Brethren in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. †"

In this Sense, to do all in the Name of Christ, is to do all with an Eye to the Command and Sovereignty of CHRIST. His Authority must be rever'd as *superiour* to all Authority upon Earth; and reaching so far, as to give Law to us in *all Things*. So he himself declares, " The Father loveth the Son, and hath given *all Things* into his Hand. ‡" And again, " *All Things* are delivered to me of my Father. ||" *All Power* and Government, he elsewhere tells us, * is given to him, in *Heaven and in Earth*. We are therefore delivered over by the Father, into the Hands of *Jesus Christ*, with this special Commandment, " This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, *Hear ye him*. †" The baptismal Covenant is a solemn Acknowledgment of this ruling Power and Authority of Christ; and an express Contract and Vow, and Engagement to "observe *all*

* John v. 43.

† 2 Thes. iii. 6.

‡ John iii. 35.

|| Luke x. 22.

* Math. xxviii. 18.

†† Matth. xvii. 5.

"Things whatsoever Christ commands." Thus the whole Practice of Religion, must be a Life of Obedience to CHRIST.

But then further; in our practical Regards to the Authority of Christ, we must ever remember that he hath not only the Authority of a Lawgiver, but of a Judge. "For we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of CHRIST, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body; according to that he hath done [most strictly and prevailingly] whether it be good or bad.†" There is not any Thing of greater Necessity, or of more constant Use in every Day's Conversation, and Actions, than this setting the Judgment-Seat of CHRIST continually before us.

These two Things, that are included in the Authority of CHRIST, must be deeply impress'd upon our Spirits. And they must be practically attended to in the whole Conduct of Life, if we would do all as God commands us in the Name of his Son.

2. To do all in the Name of CHRIST implies a continual Dependence upon his Strength and Assistance.

When David sets the Power and Strength of God, against the Boasts of Goliath, he useth this Form of Speech, "I come to thee in the Name of the Lord of Hosts. ‡"

Matth. xxviii. last ver. 2 Cor. x. 12.

† 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

Upon

Upon which it is justly observed, that we go out in the *Name* of God, when we go out in God's *Strength*, and endued with his Power. The Apostle carries this expressly to Jesus Christ: "I can do all *Things thro' Christ* which strengtheneth *me.*"

To do all in the Name of Christ, as it may thus signify a continual looking to him for *Strength* and *Assistance*, may be applied to practice three Ways.

First, We must consider him as *providentially* present with us in all our common and natural Actions. And so must learn to say upon all Occasions, in our Minds, tho' not with our Lips, "If the LORD will, we shall live and do this or that.†" St. James would have all Christians, in their Removes from one City to another, and in their *buying* and *selling*, and *getting Gain*, constantly to refer themselves in this Manner to the *Will* of their Lord.

Secondly, There is a more *special* and gracious Presence of CHRIST, that must be practically regarded in all our *spiritual* Actions, and Endeavours. "Be *Strong in the LORD*, and in the Power of his *Might.*‡" In every religious Service and Undertaking, we are to look to him who is our *Captain* and *Chief-Leader*,|| that we may derive in-

* Phil. iv. 13.

† Eph. vi. 10.

‡ James iv. 15.

|| Ἀρχηγός Heb. xii. 2.

ward Courage and Resolution and Power from him. He is the *Perfeeter* or *Finisher* of our Faith, in every Branch and Degree of it.

Thirdly, In all *extraordinary Services* and *Tryals* we are encouraged to depend upon *extraordinary Grace*. CHRIST himself gave this Assurance to St. Paul, "My Grace is sufficient for thee. *" And in the Comfort of this St. Paul speaks to his Son *Timothy*, to "be *strong in the Grace* that is in Christ Jesus. †" Nothing strengthens so much as Grace, and Goodness, and Hope. Nor is there any Grace or Goodness so powerful and extensive, nor any Hope so reasonable and lively, as that which is in CHRIST JESUS.

These Things must go throughout Practice, so as to *undertake* nothing but what we can look for the Grace and Assistance of CHRIST to accomplish. Nor must we *give up* any Thing that he requires, thro' Fear or Feebleness, while we have his Strength and Spirit to support and back us.

3. To do all in the *Name* of CHRIST implies a *constant Intention* of his *Glory*, and doing every Thing for *his Sake*.

Thus the Phrase of receiving "a Prophet *in the Name* of a Prophet, and a righteous Man *in the Name* of a righteous

* 2 Cor. xii. 9. † 2 Tim. ii. 1.

"Man,"

"Man, *" must be understood of receiving them for the Sake of their being such. As Christ sought the Honour of his Father, we are to seek the Honour of Christ, and the Rewards which come from him. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord: Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. †". Our glorifying God both in Body and Spirit, must be upon this Foundation, and with this constant View, "that we are bought with a Price. ||"

To be thus continually intending the Honour of Christ, and to do all for his Sake, implies two Things; namely, that his Honour and Glory be both the End, and the Measure, of our Actions.

First, We must fix our Thoughts upon his Glory as our ultimate End in every Course we take. Whatever may be the immediate End of this, or the other particular Action, yet our main and governing End must be the Glory of our great Redeemer.

Upon this a serious Writer observes, that tho' the Purity of the End will not correct the Viciousness of the Means, as the popish Casuists teach; yet it will sanctify all our natural and civil Actions, and inscribe them

* Matth. x. 41.

† Colos. iii. 23, 24. || 1 Cor. vi. 20.

with the Words of that Prophecy, * "Holi-
ness to the Lord." *

There must be such an *habitual* Intention of honouring Christ, that whether we *actually* think of it or not, all our Actions must be conducted as if we did. They must appear servicable to such an End; whenever we sit down seriously to consider them.

I have somewhere met with this Matter familiarly described by the following Similitude. We ought supremely and constantly to intend the Honour of Christ, just as a Man that goes to some Town at a Distance upon an important Affair, intends to reach it as soon as he can. He does not think of the Place to which he is going every Step he takes; but if he cometh to any Part of the Road where there are two or more Ways, then he considers the End with which he set out in his Journey, and the Place to which he is going; and accordingly he chooses his Course and Way, that he may accomplish his main Design.

Secondly, To this it must be further added, that in doing all for the Sake and Honour of CHRIST, we are to make his Glory the Measure of our Actions.

* Zach. xiv. 21.

Those

Those great *Ends* of *Life* which CHRIST propoſeth to us, ſhould regulate and moderate our *eating*, *drinking*, and *gratifying* the Body; as alſo our *caring* about it, and *providing* for it, and managing all *civil* and *worldly* Affairs. For the Sake of CHRIST, and his Interest, we ſhould chiefly deſire to live; and therefore for his Sake we ſhould take care of Life, and what relates to it. But *no way* concerning ourſelves with Things that are contrary to him, or would make us aſhamed of him.

This Rule muſt be ever at hand, to bound and meaſure our common and civil Actions: "To me to *live* is CHRIST. *". And then we are ſure that where this is the great Rule of Life, the End of it will be exceeding joyſul and gainſol. "To die is gain."

4. To do all *in the Name* of Chriſt implies a conſtant Senſe and Belief of that *Acceptance* which He hath with God, and is alone able to *procure* for us.

We have no Encouragement to think that our Perſons, or Addreſſes, will be accepted by God, on any other Account but the *Mediation* of his Son. Therefore CHRIST bids us † *ask in his Name*. And we are required to give "Thanks always, and for all Things, *in the Name* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. †"

* Phil. i. 21.

† John xiv. 13.

‡ Ephes. v. 20.

This Phrase is easily understood, when you apply it to the common Method of making Interest for some Favour, from a Person that is superiour to you, or unknown. You will find out some Body that is acquainted with the Person to whom you want a Recommendation; and you will desire and seek for one, that you believe has a good Interest in him. You then think a matter very hopeful if such an one will say "Go in my Name; all the Esteem and Friendship I have shall be used for you." If by this Means you succeed in any Affair, you look upon every Thing that is done as owing to the Acceptance of *that Name*, and to the Favour thereby procured. In like Manner, every Thing we do in the Way of Access to God, or upon a religious Foot, must be upon that Acceptance which we have by Virtue of the Name and Mediation of CHRIST. We are to act in all our Services, and Sacrifices, as only "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." *

Thus let us add to the former Account of Love, this Commandment also, that we "believe in the Name of Jesus Christ." And this again, will carry us to observe all God's Commandments.

I shall close this Chapter, by requesting the Reader not to pass on, till he has fixt upon his Mind a deep Sense of the Necessity

of v. 1. Pet. ii. 5.

of

of *Faith in Christ*, and of its *continual Exercise*. "The *Life* which I now live in the *Flesh*, I live by the *Faith* of the *Son* of *God*, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*"

There are *four* Ways in which our present *Life* is principally to be considered; viz. As it is a conflict with *Sin* and *Temptation*: As it is an Intercourse with *God*: As it is a Converse with *Men*: And as it is a Pursuit of *Immortality*, or a Preparation for a future State of Existence. In all these Respects the *Life* we live in the *Flesh* should be by the *Faith* of the *Son* of *God*.†

Faith with some People (says Mr. *Smith* in his *Select Discourses*) "is only an ambitious Project, to become a Favourite of Heaven in contempt of others. Or it is an Expedient to procure a mere empty Pardon of Sin, and get the Debt-Book crossed, whilst yet the Power and Practice of Sin is continued. But a saving Faith does not aim at such fanciful Advances, and Acquittances. It does not expect the raising a Soul to the glorious Presence of God 'till it is fitted for it; and therefore applies with greatest Earnestness and Patience to do and bear the Will of God, and to learn Subjection to the Father of Spirits, that it may live."

* Gal. ii. 20.

† See *Boyse's* Sermons on this Text.

Saving Faith cannot take up with the outward clearing of Debts by another, unless we are also made Partakers of a *new Nature*. It is not content with a Heaven *hereafter*, unless there be something of Heaven brought into the Soul, in its Peace and good Dispositions at *present*. It is not satisfied to wait for *all* our Salvation in a future World, but it must see the Salvation *begun* here. It must have something of those Joys, which arise from the Conquest of Corruptions and Temptations *now*, and from the Exercise of Christian Graces at present. True Faith in the Name of Christ, is always productive of a most insatiable Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness: And this makes the believing Soul long for a perfectly sinless State, and a Consummation of all Grace in the Kingdom of Glory.

In short, that Faith which does all with an Eye to the Mediator, and in his Name, should be most intensely minded: And then it must needs carry us to keep all God's Commandments, because it wholly rests the Hope of Salvation upon Christ's *being formed in us*; and *creating us anew unto good Works*; and having the *same Mind in us that was also in our LORD*; and *walking as he walked*.

C H A P. VI.

Of keeping the Commandments of God as they are comprized in that general Abstract of them, viz. doing *justly*, loving *Mercy*, and walking *humbly* with God.

WE have consider'd the Commandments of God, as all summ'd up in one Word; LOVE. We have added that Place where BELIEF in the Name of Christ, is commanded together with the Love of one another: And thus our whole Duty is summ'd up in two Words, *Belief* and *Love*. I now proceed to those Summaries of practical Religion which the Wisdom of God hath seen fit to give us under *three Heads*.

Short and general Abstracts of our Duty, are mercifully ordered by God, to help our *Memories*, and to keep upon our Minds a more *constant* Sense of what our Religion requires of us. These ought to be well studied, and fixed upon our Thoughts, that we may come under the Power of them, in order to a more careful Enquiry after the particular Branches of our Duty, under such general Rules.

O

There

There are two noted Places of Scripture, that under *three* Heads give us an Account of all that God requires. The one is in the *Old Testament*; the other is in the *New*. Each of which may well deserve a distinct Consideration. And then, as the Meaning and Design of both, is one and the same; I shall take Occasion, from the *latter* of them, to set down the particular Virtues or Graces, that belong to each general Head.

The Old Testament Account of our Duty stands thus: "He hath shewed thee, O Man! what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do *justly*, and to love *Mercy*, and to *walk humbly* with thy God? *"

It concerns us vastly; to mind what is here required; and what Things are here equally required; and to take care this Connexion be always duly observed. This will appear one of the *best* Abstracts of practical Religion, and one of the most *useful* Rules that we have to walk by, from the following Observations.

Observe I. That the Things here shewed and declared, are shewed *unto Man* as such.

* Micah vi. 8.

That

That is, as a reasonable Creature, and perfectly suited to his reasonable Nature and Capacities.

O *Man!* whoever thou art, and whatever Religion thou professest, this is required of thee; That the Principles of Justice, and Compassion toward Men, and of Devotion to the blessed God, should be diligently attended to.

These Things are written upon the Tables of our Hearts, as well as in the Book of God's Law. Thus far, they who had no written Tables, or Revelation from God, yet "were a Law unto themselves, having the Work of the Law written in their Hearts. * " These are Principles inwrought into our very Frame; so that all Sorts of Persons, learned or unlearned, experienced or unexperienced, have some Sense of them.

Tho' there be a dreadful *defacing* of these Things upon the Souls of Men, by the abuse of their reasonable Capacities, and by choosing to indulge their brutish Appetites; yet the great and main Lines are still remaining. Therefore it is, that all Ages and Nations consent to speak well of those who are eminent for Acts of Piety, Justice, and Charity; whilst they condemn those that are notorious for the contrary Behavi-

* Rom. ii. 14, 15.

our. Use thy Reason as a *Man*, and it will shew thee how admirable an Account of all practical Religion this is. And then search the *Scriptures*; and there you will see every Thing God has expressly required of us, may be reduced to one or the other of these Heads.

II. Observe, that God, the supreme God, hath *shewed thee* these Things; and all true Religion consists in *complying* with what He *shews* and *declares*.

It is not what the Superstition of Men, or a Party Zeal, may require. Those who teach for *Doctrines* the *Commandments of Men*, our Saviour condemns, as doing the greatest Injury to the most important and substantial Commandments of God.*

All the Laws of *Nations* and *Kingdoms*, can no way alter what God hath here declared and established. Much less can the peculiar Notion or Authority of this and the other particular *Man*, (tho' never so wise, or learned, or good and pious,) make any Thing requisite in Religion which would break in upon any one of these three Things God hath shewed us.

To do an unjust Thing, or an unmerciful uncharitable Thing, can be justified by no Pretences to Religion whatsoever. For what

* Matth. xv. 9.

God hath declared and determined to be Religion is, to do justly, and to love Mercy.

It must also be added, that no Power or Authority amongst Men can dispense with, or set aside, that *Devotion* and *Obedience* we owe to God, by any Pretensions to publick Justice or the Good of Society. To walk *humbly* and conscientiously with God, is one of the plainest strongest Dictates of Religion. And to walk humbly with him, must certainly be understood to walk as he hath *shewed* us.

Observe (III.) That what God hath shewed, is for the *Good of Man*.

It is universally, and constantly so. Justice, Mercy, and Piety, are Things manifestly leading to Happiness, both here and hereafter. Many Things are commanded by Men that prove pernicious and hurtful: In the very best Schemes of Religion, as they are of human devising and imposing, there are many corrupt Mixtures: But take Things as God hath *shewed* them to us, and keep to what he requires *only*, and then we are sure to have *nothing* but what is *good*: Yea more than that, to have nothing but what every Person's right Regard to himself, shall make him own, is really good for *him*. The common Sense of Mankind, would establish its Goodness:

If

If Religion could be brought in Fact and Practice, as it is in Profession, to such a Standard as this, how happy would it make us! And how soon would it spread from one People and Nation to another, throughout the whole Earth!

The Disgrace of our holy Religion among *Strangers*, has been owing to some People's carrying the *Contraries* to it, together with the *Name* of it. When they called themselves Christians, at the same Time they have acted *unjustly*; or with Pride and Cruelty; or have discovered some Prophaneness and impious Abuse or Neglect of the *Deity*, that has stab'd their own Cause.

On the very same Account, Christian Churches have fallen into the most miserable Contentions and Confusions amongst themselves. How common is it to set other Things upon the Level with Justice, and Mercy, and walking humbly with God? Yea to make other Things *take Place* of these, thro' a false and mistaken Zeal to preserve certain *Forms of Words*, or *Rites of Worship*?

But is there any Comparison betwixt a just and righteous, a merciful and benevolent Disposition; and a particular *Opinion* or Form of *Expression*? Is there any Comparison to be made, betwixt an outward *Dress* or *Posture*, or peculiar Way of Worship; and

and a Soul humbly *devoted* to its God, and walking with him at all Times?

Could we once keep to these *main* Points of Religion; and whatever is not reducible to these Heads, or appears inconsistent with any *one* of them, agree to reject it and throw it out; then would the invidious Distinction of Parties, and the Attempts of weak or ill Men, drop of Course. What doth the Lord require, but this? The asking it as a Question, makes the Declaration still fuller and stronger. "What *more* is there required, "or what can be insisted on as true Religion *beyond* this?" Nothing certainly is commanded of God, but what may be brought under this Summary, to do *justly*, and love *Mercy*, and walk humbly with God.

Obs. (IV.) That these Things (all of them shewed by God, and equally declared good) ought never to be *separated* from, or *opposed* to one another.

Since the Substance of all Religion, both natural and revealed, is so justly and plainly laid before us, in this short Compass; we ought to give the utmost Heed that we do not maim this beautiful Scheme, by setting aside any *one* of the three Things here shew'd us; or by making the Observance of one, an Excuse for doing any Thing contrary to another.

I will instance in every Particular yet more distinctly, that I may carry this Rule into the common Ways of judging and talking about Matters of Religion.

The first Thing here set down is to do *justly*. That is, to do every Thing just and right in the Management of our selves; which includes all the Rules of *Sobriety*. And then, "whatever we would that Men should do to us, so must we do to them." This is the true Foundation and Measure of *Justice*, and an essential Part of Religion. But if any Man will content himself with Things that are barely just; or will so rigorously insist upon what he counts just, as to make no charitable Allowances for the *Apprehensions* of others, nor to shew any *Mercy* to their Faults or Sufferings; here Religion is maimed, and one of the three Branches is cut off and set aside.

For, *Mercy* takes up as great a Part in the Scheme of true Religion, as *Justice*. Yea we must act every Thing upon a Principle of Love: The Expression is, to love *Mercy*. There must be a devising and contriving for charitable Actions; and a Delight in every Thing that is tender and compassionate. Bearing, and forbearing; giving, and forgiving; and shewing all Manner of benevolence both to the Souls and Bodies of Men.

Well;

Well; but suppose a Person goes thus far, to be very *Good*, as well as *Just* to all his fellow Creatures; yet if he refuses that Reverence, Homage or Obedience, which his *God demands* from him; here's a third Part of Religion wanting; and such a Part, as is of absolute Necessity to his right observing the other two.

Take care to attend to this, — That there must be a Reverence for the *Deity* both in Words and Actions; there must be a devoting ourselves to him, and a worshipping him in every solemn Service that he has appointed; and a constant Sense of our Dependance upon him; with Love, and Trust, and Renignation, and a Care to do our Duty to him at all Times. All this must now be done, as he is reconciling the World to himself by our *Lord Jesus Christ*. But in this Point again, if any Man lay such a Stress upon his Faith or Devotion, as to do *unjustly* and live in a Course of *Unrighteousness*; or if his professed Concern for the Honour and Worship of God, makes him *unmerciful* to his Neighbour and Brother, and destroys the express Rules of *Charity*; there Religion becomes a maimed, defaced Thing.

One great Design of putting these Things together, in so short a Scheme or Summary of Religion, no doubt was this; to engage us while we attend to *one*, not to forget or

contradict *another*: And also to prevent our ever placing Religion in any one of them *alone*. Thus to keep the Commandments of God, so as not to dash one Table of his Law against the other, is the whole Duty of Man, and should be made the constant Business and Care of Life.

It is a vast Concern, to guard against every turn of Mind that would make us carry it, as if we could not be enough employ'd in Things that are just and kind to our *fellow Creatures*, without neglecting or dishonouring our *Maker*. And on the other Hand, we should take Care not to act as if we thought God could not be loved well enough, unless we were injuring, and uncharitably defaming, or persecuting, and destroying our Neighbour.

I do not mention the particular Duties or Commandments that are included under these general Heads, because I propose to do that under the next summary of Religion, which I have promised to explain.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

Of keeping God's Commandments,
as they are compriz'd under the
Heads of living *soberly, righteous-
ly, and godly*, in this present World.

THE New Testament hath put the
whole Duty of Man under the same
Heads with the Old; but with some Diffe-
rence of Expression. "The Grace of
God which bringeth Salvation teacheth
us, that, denying Ungodliness and world-
ly Lusts, we should live *soberly, righte-
ously, and godly* in this present World.*"

The Christian Life is described in *three*
Things; namely, a living *soberly*, which is
commonly understood to take in all the
Duties we owe to *ourselves*; and by living
righteously, which includes all that we owe
to *others* about us; and by living *godly*,
which comprehends the whole of our Be-
haviour and Duty to God.

In order to our living such a Life as this,
every Thing that opposeth it and is con-
trary to it, must be renounced and denied.

* Titus ii. 11, 12.

Therefore the Gospel teacheth Men to deny *Ungodliness* and *worldly Lusts*, because the reigning of these, is utterly inconsistent with a Life of Sobriety, Righteousness, and Godliness. The *Fear* of God, is thus taught by the *Grace* of the Gospel, as well as by former Dispensations, to be one half of Religion. Ceasing from, and denying *Evil*, is here join'd with living piously and well.

But having so largely considered the *Fear* of God, in its destroying the Power of *Evil*, in the former Part of this Book, I shall not here stay upon the Description given of this Matter in the Passage of *St. Paul* last quoted. Only as a brief and general Explication of it, may lead to the great Branches of Duty which I am to go upon more distinctly and fully in this Chapter, so it may not be unprofitable or ungrateful to the Reader, to have a Summary of what is meant by *Ungodliness* and *worldly Lusts* here set before him.

By denying *Ungodliness*, is meant a casting off all the Practices of Idolatry, and all the Principles of it too, from which the first Christians were called. It is ever since, an Obligation upon all Christians, to abhor the Affection of Atheism and Infidelity. The Gospel equally teaches all Men, to avoid impious Prophanations of Things sacred; and

and all slighting Apprehensions and Talks of Providence; and all Contempt of the great Expectation of future Rewards, and Punishments, which are founded upon the eternal unalterable Difference betwixt Good and Evil.

A religious Life can never be seriously intended, or set about, without a reverent Attention to God, the great Object of all Religion: It cannot be, without a Belief of his Presence, as Ruler and Disposer of every thing he has made; and a most awful Regard to him as a Punisher, and Rewarder. These are the great Motives and Springs of Piety, both in Heart and Life. Till Ungodliness with Respect to these Things be denied, Men will never set themselves to rule or bridle their worldly and sensual Inclinations.

But to proceed, the Grace that brings Salvation teacheth us also, to deny worldly Lusts. These are of three Kinds, and all equally destructive to true Religion, and therefore to be renounced by us.

1. We are to deny the Lust of Power and Preeminence over others. A most impetuous Lust in some, producing all Manner of Strife, Envy, Hatred, Jealousy, Confusion, and every evil Work.

2. We must deny also, the Lust of Riches, called by St. John the Lust of the Eyes. This is

is a vehement and most grievous Lust in many: Spending themselves in vain and sinful Contrivances to gain a great deal of Wealth, which is to serve for no other Use to the Owner but the *beholding* of it *with his Eyes*. * It is a sufficient Gratification to some fordid Minds, only to look upon their Heaps, or their Papers and Securities, and to think that they can call *so much* their own. Others, lust after Wealth to gratify the Eye and Fancy, with all the Ornaments and Accomodations, and Buildings, and Gardens, and Furniture, and publick Shews, that Wealth is capable of procuring. And, too often, they go beyond their own Stock to the Wrong and Prejudice of others. All this is properly called the *Lust* of the Eyes.

3. There must further be a denying the Lust of *grosser Pleasures*, in making sinful *Provision* for the *Flesh*. That is, we must not so provide for it, as to eat and drink with the *Drunken*, or to wanton with the lascivious and *unclean*, or to indulge an habitual *Sloth* and Idleness.

All these Lusts are destructive to the Soul, as they hinder the true Use of its reasonable Capacities, and bring it under the Power of evil Habits and Dispositions. They necessarily exclude it from the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For in that Kingdom,

* Eccles. v. 11.

a direct contrary Use of all the Powers of Reason is required; and quite contrary Dispositions are of absolute Necessity to prepare us for heavenly Inheritance.

Those Things which are included in the Notion of Ungodliness, and all those that come under the Account of worldly Lusts, being deny'd and continually watch'd against; we shall be led of Course to live soberly, righteously, and godly according to the Command or Direction of the Word of God.

It is indeed a very large Part of the Concern of Man, in keeping God's Commandments, to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts. Because all along the Christian Life, both in what Respects ourselves, our Neighbours and our God, we shall find one or other Lust, and Motion of Ungodliness, to contend with and renounce. For this Reason, I desire these Things may be review'd, and kept in mind: "The Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, are of the World. * " They must, therefore, be denied by us, if we would be saved out of this World.

Taking this along with us, we have a full Account of the Commandments of God given us under these three Heads, to live *soberly, righteously, and godly.* The Vir-

* 1 John ii. 16.

tues or Graces that belong to these Heads, are commonly distinguished by the Names of *human, social, and divine*. It will be proper to set down the Branches of Duty which belong to each of these, in a *Section* by it self.



SECT. I.

Of Living soberly; Or a distinct View of the human Virtues, in their several Branches.

SOBRIETY consists, in a Man's keeping within those Bounds that God hath set for the right Government of himself. The right Use and Management of our reasonable Powers, is called *thinking soberly*. The right ordering our sensitive Passions and Appetites, is to *walk and act soberly*. So that the Commandments of God which are included in Sobriety, distinctly point out to us the Duties which every Man owes to his *Mind*, and to his *Body*.

For conducting ourselves with Sobriety of *Mind*, the Precepts and Rules God hath given us are very numerous, but are easy to be remembred under these six following Particulars.

Consideration,

Humility,

Meekness,

Contentment,

Prudence,

Fertitude, or Constancy; which also

includes Patience.

A right Sense of these Things fix'd on the Heart and Memory, would keep our Minds in a constantly sober and happy Temper.

I. *Consideration, and Thoughtfulness.*

This keeps the reasonable Powers always in Exercise; gives us a Habit of *attending* to Things; and prevents that dull musing, vain rambling, and frequent Absence of the Mind, which spoils its Pleasure, and oft exposes it to Contempt and Danger. "Be ye not unwise, but *understanding* what the Will of the Lord is. *"

And as there must be an Attention to the Will of God in general, throughout Nature, Providence, and Scripture; so there must be a particular Consideration of those Things, that may furnish the Mind with any useful Knowledge and Experience.

This takes in all the Rules and Methods for *Self-furniture*.

* Eph. v. 17.

2. *Humility*, and *Lowliness*. "Blessed
" are the Poor in Spirit. *"

By this we are led to study and observe
all the Rules of *Dependance*, both on God,
and our fellow Creatures; and to keep a
submissive and condescending Temper in our
selves; and to watch against all the first
Emotions and Risings of *Pride*, *Vain-glory*,
Self-trust, and *self-Conceit*.

This teacheth us a right *Self-Valuation*.

3. *Meekness*; or keeping our Resentments
and angry Passions under Command. "Bless-
" ed are the Meek. ||"

By gaining and preserving this Disposi-
tion of Soul, we are delivered from *Fierce-
ness*, or rash Anger; from *Fury*, or violent
Anger; and from *Malice*, or continued An-
ger. All which, the Word of God Com-
mands us to suppress, or avoid.

This leads us to all the safe and good
Rules of *Self-Vindication*.

4. *Contentment*; or the Moderation of
our coveting, fretting, and envious Passions.

"I have learnt (says St. Paul) in whatso-
" ever State I am therewith to be content. †"

And again, "Godliness with Contentment is
" great Gain. ‡"

* Matth. v. 3.

† Phil. iv. 11.

|| Matth. v. 5.

‡ 1 Tim. vi. 6.

By this Grace, the Mind is freed from uneasy Thoughts about its own *Lot* and Station: And from *irregular* Affections, and Desires after Persons or Things *not to be* obtained: And from craving inordinately, and with Impatience, what *may be* obtained; so as to seize it out of *Time*, or to covet *beyond* what is needful. These are Disorders that grievously spoil the Sobriety of the Mind.

Contentment also frees a Spirit from *Envy* of the Ease, or Enjoyments, or Gifts of others; and from *grudging* at the Favours bestow'd upon them.

It delivers from *Anxiety*, and Distrust of God Almighty's Care.

It prevents *murmuring*, or *raving*, at any sudden calamitous Events. In short, the Mind is taught both "how to be abased, and how to abound."

This leads to *Self-Possession*, and is a Kind of *Self-Sufficiency* in and with God.

5. *Prudence* is a Branch of inward Sobriety. "Behold my Servant (saith God) shall deal prudently.*" And that others may do so too, that Servant directs us "to be wise as Serpents, harmless as Doves.†"

By this Virtue, we are instructed to a wise and orderly *Disposal* of our Thoughts,

* Isai. lii. 13.

† Matth. x. 16.

and Affairs. This leads us to study well the *Reason* and *Fitness* of Things, and the *Will* of God: And to *suit* all our Measures and *Conduct* thereto, according to our best Judgment and Apprehension.

By this Means, Rashness of Expression, and Indecency of Action are prevented:

An eager, talkative Disposition is cured:

Affectation is shamed:

Mean and Vain Amusements are dropt:

And a disorderly unforecasting Temper is brought to *Method* and *Contrivance*.

Under Prudence are contained all the proper Rules for *Self-Management*.

6. *Fortitude* or *Constancy* of Mind is necessarily included in the complete Notion of *Sobriety*. "Be of good Courage, and
" he shall strengthen thine Heart.*" "The
" righteous also shall hold on his Way, and
" he that hath clean Hands shall be stronger
" and stronger.†"

True *Fortitude* consists, in maintaining that *firm* and *steddy* Disposition of Soul, that shall secure the *due Exercise* of all the *Vir-
tues* and *Graces* foregoing.

It takes in all the Rules of *Patience* for bearing, as well as *Courage* for acting. "Be
" ye also *patient*, stablish your Hearts, for
" the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.‡"

* Psal. xxvii. 14.

† Job xvii. 9.

‡ James v. 8.

Fortitude.

Fortitude, when thus considered, is not to be look'd upon as something out of our reach to attain, but as far as *Constancy* and *Patience* can carry us, it is certainly to be attained as well as other Virtues.

And without this, we shall neither be able to go far in Self-Furniture; nor to proceed aright in our Notions of Self-Valuation; nor to take the proper Steps for Self-Defence; nor to secure a lasting Self-Possession; nor to keep to the Rules of Self-Management; in all which, the real Goodness and Excellency of the Mind does consist. It is Fortitude only that brings it to a happy State of *Self-Consistency*.

To proceed: The Rules and Commandments for living soberly in the right Conduct of our *Bodies*, are also very many; but may well be comprized under these *four* particulars.

Temperance,
Chastity,
Diligence, and
Mortification.

1. *Temperance*. "Every Man that striveth for the Mastery is *temperate in all Things*; now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible.*"

* 1 Cor. ix. 25.

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To be temperate in all Things, includes a regular and moderate Use of those Things that are allowed for the *Health* and *Sustenance* of the Body :

A being moderate also in its *Clothing* and *Ornaments* ; in its *Entertainments*, and *Diversions* ; in fitting up its *Place of abode*, with the *Furniture* and *Conveniencies* thereof ; and in the *Provision* that is thought necessary to lay in, for the *Future* supply of these Things.

The true Notion of Temperance lieth, in neither denying the Body what is *useful*, and *needful*, according as God blesteth us ; nor going *beyond* our *Necessities*, or our *Stations*, merely to gratify and indulge a sensual Appetite and Fancy.

Nor must we pretend what is useful, and suited to our Stations, so as to prevent Acts of *Mercy* and *Charity*.

Temperance thus explain'd, is so great a Branch of sober-living, that He who manages wisely and orderly in this one Point, passes with the Bulk of Mankind for a *sober Man*. A Duty, this, we owe to the Body, for its Preservation ; and to render it a fit Instrument, both of Action, and Pleasure, to the Mind.

2. To live soberly in a right Conduct of the Body, is, to live *chastly*. " I beseech you (saith St. Peter) as Strangers and Pilgrims,

"grims, abstain from *fleshy Lusts* which
 "war against the Soul.*" "He that com-
 "mitteth Fornication, sinneth against his
 "own Body.†" "Fornication and all Un-
 "cleanness let it not once be named amongst
 "you, as becometh Saints.||"

Chastity hath a regard to all those Com-
 mandments of God that relate to *Increase*,
 and the multiplying of Bodies upon this
 Earth.

By observing which, we are delivered
 from all those detestable Acts of *Unclean-
 ness*, that would destroy the great Design of
 God in his first forming Man *Male* and *Fe-
 male*.

Or else, would set aside the Institution of
Marriage, which was contriv'd to produce
 a *Succession* of living Images of our Maker,
 and to secure their being brought up for
 him.

A Lewdness that destroys Propagation, is
 something worse than brutish. And a Brood of
Fornication, brought up after that Manner, are
 no better than a Flock of Brutes. Children
 are turned out into the World without In-
 struction, or Discipline, or any Fear or or-
 derly Regard either to God or Man. The
 Scripture has very many, and very awful
 Things, upon this Branch of sober living,
Chastity.

* 1 Pet. ii. 11.

† 1 Cor. vi. 18.

|| Eph. v. 3.

3. *Diligence*, or right Employment of the Body, belongs to a sober Conduct. "Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. * This Virtue consists, in avoiding the Extreams of *Idleness*, or living without any Employment on one Hand; and needless *Anxiety*, with excessive *hurrying* on the other Hand.

We must see to it, that we employ ourselves in Things justifiable and *honest*; and in a Way that is suited to our own Capacity, and the *Allotments* of Providence.

Our Employments should be *stated*, and continued; and whatever we do, we should do it with proper *Vigour* and Application.

Thus we are taught to commit ourselves and our Way unto the Lord, and to look to him to "establish the Work of our Hands."

4. *Mortification* of the Body, is a Branch of Christian Sobriety.

By this, the Body is subjected to the Will of God, and to the Powers of Reason, in all its Actions, and Enjoyments; yea in its very Life and Being.

There must be an absolute restraining the Body from all *sinful* Gratifications. There must also be an abstaining from Things na-

turally *lawful* and desireable, in some Cases, for spiritual and religious Ends.

Yea such is the Mortification taught by Christianity, that these Bodies must bear Contempt and Reproach, Want and Pains, and the worst Treatment from Men now; as far as we are called by the Providence of God to sustain one or more of these Evils; that we may obtain a glorious Resurrection hereafter.

However the Flesh may reluctate, it must be brought to obey the Dictates of our Minds, and the Word of God.

This completes the Notion of living soberly in the Conduct of our Bodies. It is described by St. Paul in that general Declaration, "I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection. *"

The Commandments of God that belong to each Particular above-mention'd, I have now by me, and ready for the Press, if desired, collected all through the Scripture. But they would take up too much Room to be put into this Treatise, which is only design'd for a short and summary View of practical Religion.

* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

R Short Sect.

SECT. II.

Of living righteously. Or a distinct View of the social Virtues, in their several Branches.

HE that would keep the Commandments of GOD, must live *righteously*, as well as *soberly*.

To the human Virtues, we must add those which are called *social Virtues*. These consist, in carrying it after such a Manner as is *right*, and *fit*, toward all with whom we have to do. Therefore our whole Duty to others is summ'd up in this one Word, **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. And the *Grace* that brings *Salvation*, will teach us every Thing that is needful to *righteous Living*.

This is elsewhere put into *two Branches*; (as in the Text before explained *Chapter VI*) namely, *Justice*, and *Mercy*, or *Charity*. These two Things do, in strict speaking, include all the Duties that we owe to our *Neighbour*.

But because, in all Societies, there must needs be *Superiours*, and *Inferiours*, therefore some have added two other Virtues necessary in social Life; namely, *Courtesy*, and *Modesty*. *Courtesy*, comprizing all that Condescension, Care and Goodness, that *Superiours* owe to those who are beneath them:

And

And *Modesty*, including all the Duties owing from *Inferiours* to their Betters.

Besides these, there are two other Virtues without which Men cannot be thoroughly good to one another, nor act as they ought under their different Circumstances: I mean *Gratitude*, to all Sorts of Benefactors; and *Peaceableness*, toward every Creature with whom we converse.

There is such a Mixture of Justice, and Charity, in the Exercise of these last four Virtues, that in some Duties belonging to them, neither Justice alone, nor Charity alone, would allow for the exact and full Description of them. And therefore they are proper to be considered by themselves; each of them containing Justice and Charity in them, by an inseparable and indescribable Composition.

Under these six Heads, you may take a full View of all the Rules of practical Religion which direct our Conduct toward our Neighbour.

Justice,

Mercy, or Charity,

Courtesy,

Submission,

Gratitude,

Peaceableness.

I. The main and leading social Virtue, is JUSTICE.

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The general Rule, (or as some stile it the Golden-Rule,) for practising this Virtue, is thus laid down by our Saviour: "Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets: *"

This will teach a Man to avoid every Thing that would injure the *Mind* and *Spirit* of another, as far as he hath any Value for his own Soul. If he knows what is most prejudicial, and uneasy to his own Thoughts, he will no more Occasion such Evil to others, than he would choofe it for himself.

He will not persuade the Soul of another to *sin*:

Nor do any Thing unnecessarily to put the Thoughts of another to *Pain*, and under *Affliction*.

This will teach us also to avoid all Injuries to the *Bodies* of others, if we have the same Regard to them that we have to our own.

We shall do nothing to take away the *Life* of any Person:

Nor to destroy any *Sense*, or *Member*;

Nor to wound, or starve him. No Man would have his own Body to suffer in any of these Respects.

* Matth. vii. 12.

Again; Justice will teach a Man to avoid every Thing that would injure another in his *Estate*, or Goods and *Possessions*.

The first and chief of a Man's Possessions are, *Wife, Children, and Servants*. So that to corrupt any of these, and entice them from a Man is a grievous Wrong to him.

Further, this Rule of Justice forbids all *Theft of Money and Goods*:

As also, *withholding* from another what is due, when it ought to be returned to him, and delivered into his Hands:

All *malicious Wrongs*, or working a Person out of *Spight*:

All *Oppression*, where a Man has Power over the Goods, or Trade, and Business of another:

And all *Frauds*, where a Man has more Knowledge and Wit than another, or is let into some Secret by which he takes Advantage to deceive and injure another:

Under these Particulars, consists that Justice which respects the Properties of Men. As to all which, the Gospel teacheth every Man to be as tender of the Properties of others, as he would have them to be of his.

But farther; the Golden-Rule of Justice will teach Men not to hurt the Reputation of another; because he would not be scorn'd,

or

or dishonour'd and run down in his own Reputation. As a Man would have his own Name used, he that is just will use the Names of others.

The Scripture expressly forbids all wounding the *Credit* of another, by witnessing *openly* Things that are false:

Or by whispering *secretly* evil Surmizes, and reproachful Stories:

Or by greatning and *aggravating* smaller Faults, with wrong and malicious Circumstances:

Or by *Slandering*, in a needless carrying about evil Reports as Busy-bodies do, from one to another; and railing against those that fall under such Reports:

Or by *deriding* and scoffing at a Person, to make him look little:

Or *exposing* him for the sake of Faults he bewails, that have really been the greatest Trouble of his Life:

Or by reproaching him for *Infirmities* that he cannot avoid; or for the Sake of some mortifying and humbling *Calamity* God is pleased to send upon him. These Things are all great Injuries to the Credit and Esteem of Men; and therefore Justice forbids them, because we would not fall under such Usage ourselves.

To secure the constant Practice of Justice, there must be a steady Regard to that upon which all Justice is founded; that is
Truth.

Truth. By which I mean both a careful searching out the Truth of Things, and then suiting our Words and Actions thereto with the greatest Integrity, according to our best Skill and Apprehension. "Lie not one to another.

II. Another social Virtue is *Mercy*, or *Charity*. Of this *St. Paul* says, "Above all Things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness.*" And *St. Peter* says, "Above all Things have fervent Charity among your selves.†"

This will teach a Man not to *envy* the Advantages and Enjoyments of another:

Not to *vaunt*, or rashly lift up himself:

Not to be *puffed up*, or swell'd with others Commendations, or Favours shew'd to him:

Not to act *unseemly* to one's Place or Character:

Not to be *selfish*, to a sinful Neglect or Contempt of others:

Not to be hastily *provoked*, or too highly to resent Things:

Not to impute Evil to any upon bare *Surmise*, or without a Necessity to have it made manifest:

Nor can Charity ever *rejoyce* in the Mis-

* Colos. iiii. 14.

† 1 Pet. iv. 8.

carriages, and Iniquities, or any other Calamities of our Neighbour.

On the contrary, Charity is the great Promoter, and Guide, and Cherisher of all good Actions. And it extendeth to all Cases that call for it: That is, both to the *Faults*, and *Wants* of Men; and, because of their Imperfections in the very best Things, to their *Differences* in Religion too.

Charity with Respect to the *Sins*, and *Faults* of Men consisteth in the following Things.

Preventing all Sin as much as may be, that it break not out:

Mercifully apologizing, when Frailty and violent Temptation draws Men to Evil:

Counselling, and endeavouring to mend the Offender, by suffering long and enduring much in order to recover him:

Forgiving many, and great Offences:

Comforting those, whom Sin hath thrown into overmuch Shame and Sorrow:

Avoiding all needless Talk of a Person's Crimes, and disliking to hear Reports spread of them:

Taking care never to make one Man's Sin, the Occasion of bespattering another; much less of abusing whole Parties and Societies of Men, for the Follies of some particular Persons;

And

And finally, praying for the Conversion and Salvation of all Offenders.

Charity, as it hath respect to the *Wants* and Necessities of others, shews itself in such Instances as these; namely,

Enquiring after distressed Cases:

Pitying those that are in Want and Affliction, and being tenderly affected toward them:

Relieving and helping them, as far as lies in our Power, when they want Health, or Meat, or Drink, or Clothing, or Lodging, or Liberty, or any Necessaries in Life or Death:

Contriving Affairs and Expences, so as to have something ready for necessary Occasions:

Being *well pleased*, when Opportunities for doing Good offer themselves:

Hoping for nothing again from those that are relieved, but only from the Favour, and Providence, and Promises of God:

And continuing in such a Course as this, without Weariness or Distrust.

In Matters of Religion, Charity will allow for different Capacities, and Education; and for different Degrees of *Impression* of divine things upon the Minds of Men.

Charity will receive those that are *weak* in the Faith, as well as those that are strong.

It will not condemn Men for different *Opinions*, in Points that are doubtful; nor for different *Forms* and Rites of Worship, where the Gospel has left room for a Variety.

It will not *censure* those that are of lower Attainments, in Matters of Practice; nor make higher Attainments a Reason for casting a *Stumbling-Block* in their Way.

It will not usurp the Place of the great *Judge*, to determine concerning the Hearts of Men, and their Sincerity; but will shew a *Moderation* to all Men, because the *LORD* is at Hand.

And once more, Charity must not be confined to those of our own Acquaintance, or Nation; but must extend to *Strangers*, and to the very *Ends* of the Earth: Yea, we are to love our *Enemies* themselves.

It must be allowed, that these things require a very large Heart to go into the full Practice of them; but the Compass is not *too great* for a Heart once truly enlarged with the *Love* of God, and carried into the Mold and *Spirit* of the Gospel.

When the Study and Practice of Justice, and Charity, become the main Concern and Business of Life, they will be found mutually promoting each other.

III. The next social Virtue which the Grace of God in the Gospel teacheth Men, is *Courtesy*.

"* Be *Courteous*," is a Christian Precept. In the general, it is a Command to carry it toward all in an † humane, civil, affable, and condescending manner; to do every thing with Benignity of Temper toward others, and with a loving Mind. It is a fine Composition of Justice, and Charity, in our Behaviour toward every particular Person, with whom we have to do.

This is peculiarly graceful in those who have any Power or Authority over others. And because we know of nothing that will so thoroughly discharge the Duties of Superiors to those that are beneath them, as a constant Humanity and Benignity of Temper and Carriage; therefore I choose to apply the Word *Courtesy*, more specially and emphatically to *Rulers*; and such as God hath bestow'd *superior* Excellencies upon, for the good of their inferiors. Thus applied, *Courtesy* includes several things, considering Men either as *Magistrates*, as Heads of *Families*, as *Pastors* and Rulers of

* 1 Pet. iii. 8.

† Οἰκονομος, Humani, humiles, affabiles, perbenigne &c.

132 *Of Courtesy in Rulers and Magistrates.*

Churches, or as having any superior *Excellency* and Advantage over others.

Courtesy and right Carriage in *Princes*, and civil *Magistrates*, to those that are in a State of Subjection, requires their Observance of the Rules that follow;

To study carefully the Laws of God, and the Obligations which these equally lay upon all Men: Then to consider the present State of human Nature, and to suit all *their Laws* as much as possible to the Good of every single Person, as well as to the common Benefit of Society. More especially to take care, that nothing be made a Law, nor any Subjection required, that would lessen or hinder any Man's Obedience to the *first* and HIGHEST Authority; I mean that of GOD. Here the utmost Tenderness and Benignity is required, to allow for the Weaknesses of Men; and for the different Impressions that are made upon them by the *Fear* of God, according to the different Ways of their Education.

Laws that are good and necessary, yet should not be insisted on, in any manner that seems *tyrannous* or *cruel*. The highest and greatest Power, will not justify a Ruler in being rigorous, and hard-hearted.

Offenders are to be distinguished, according to the *Nature* of their Offences; and the *Temper* of Mind with which they are com-

committed. Where Mercy may fully take Place, Pity and Condescension will incline the Magistrate to *shew* Mercy.

A courteous Regard to the Welfare of their Subjects, will also teach Them *that* rule, to do it *with Diligence*; and to neglect no Opportunity of doing a right and favourable thing, to those that properly seek their Protection, and want their Assistance.

They will shew a readiness to bestow *special Favours*, on Men that are specially useful and beneficial to the Publick; and will seek out for Occasions to befriend the *Needy and Helpless*. They will be ready to raise the Lowly when deserving, as well as to reward the Great; and will *despise* no Cases, or Persons, that call for either their Justice or Mercy, in any thing that belongs to their proper Station.

Under these Heads every thing may be comprized that makes up the Character of a *good Ruler*.

Let us next proceed to Courtesy and right Carriage in *Heads of Families*. This requires a due regard to the Rules given, both for the general Management of themselves, and answering each relation in which they stand to those under their Care.

Every Master of a Family is obliged to *provide* for those of his own House. This is a Point of Justice. But Courtesy will con-
trive

trive much further for the Comfort and Advantage of a Man's Dependants, than strict Justice would oblige him to.

It will also make a Man's whole Conduct in his House to be *useful* and instructive, sincere and *condescending*.

A virtuous Wife will bear a part with a courteous and diligent Husband, in providing for, and supplying the Wants of the inferior Parts of the Family, *Prov. xxxi. 13. to 21.*

The Duty of *Husbands* towards their Wives may be sum'd up in the following *Rules*.

In *loving* them as their *own Bodies* :

In shewing a special *Concern* to promote their *Virtue* and *Salvation* :

In freely *counselling* and directing them, where they desire or *need* it :

Prudently *reproving* their *Faults* :

Making them Partners in daily *Prayers* :

Dwelling with them according to *Knowledge*, and not merely according to *Humour* :

And in keeping faithfully the *Marriage Oath* and *Covenant*.

The courteous *Regards* which *Parents* owe to their *Children* are these : *viz.*

All due care of their *Bodies*, to nourish and to provide for them ; and to render them as *healthful*, and acceptable, in their growing up

up into the World, as a Parent's Prudence and Watchfulness can make them.

More especially there must be diligent *Instruction*; Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept: With every thing that may contribute to a good Education, according to the Stations in which Children are likely to be placed in the World. The Improvement of the Mind, and forming that for Usefulness, must regulate the foremention'd Care and Tenderness over the Body.

There must be great *Affection*, and a constant avoiding all passionate Provocations of Children. Violent Passions should never be shewn *before* Children: Their own Passions are naturally strong enough, and need nothing to enflame them. Least of all should their Spirits be unduly moved by any violent Usage.

But yet, timely and proper *Corrections* are as necessary as *Instruction*. In which there must be a Care, that every Correction be suited to the *Temper* of the Child, and proportioned to the *Nature* and *Circumstances* of the *Fault* committed.

Once more, it is a main Branch of Courtesy in Parents toward their Children, to set them a *good Example*: And that they may do this more effectually, they should have their Children with them at the times of their Devotion; and at other times too, as much as conveniently they can.

We are further to consider the Duty of Masters and Mistresses toward Servants.

There must be an equitable and sufficient Allowance of *Wages*, according to their different Work and Places.

There must be great Moderation of *Temper*, and Distinctness in giving Orders and Commands.

Whenever there is Reason to shew *Displeasure*, a Servant should be made sensible where his or her Fault lies; and the Correction should be contriv'd so, as to impress a right and lasting Sense of what is necessary to prevent the like Offence for the future.

Good *Instruction* should be given to Servants, and prudent Counsels; and good Example, as well as to Children. And they should be called to Family-Prayer. And times of Leisure should also be allowed them, to improve in Wisdom, and Goodness, and to attend the secret Exercises of Piety toward God.

And then in extraordinary Cases, signal *Care* and *Faithfulness* in Servants, should have special and distinguishing Encouragements and Rewards.

Children should be always taught, while under Age, to carry it obligingly towards Servants. Never commanding, but rather desiring things of them. Not expecting any

any thing to be done by a Servant, which may properly and conveniently be done by themselves. Apologizing for the Faults of Servants, rather than aggravating them. And shewing all friendly Dispositions that are safe; that is, such as neither carry Children into Meanness in their own Tempers, nor expose them to the Contempt of others.

These are the general Directions for *Family* Courtesy, and religious Condescensions.

The next Order and Rank of Men that are called to great and many *Condescensions*, are the Ministers of Religion; more especially the settled *Pastors* of Churches, and those that act *under* them, or in their stead.

Their Duties may be comprized under the general Rules following. They must shew all manner of Care and Courtesy in their continual Endeavours to *instruct* and *persuade* Men; and they must stoop to those Methods, which are most likely to attain this end on all those that attend their Ministry.

In all their Warnings and Persuasions, they must avoid *Lording* it over others: Always referring what they say, to that Throne of Judgment which God hath placed in every Man's Breast; endeavouring, as the Gospel directs, to approve themselves to

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138 *Duty of the Ministers of Religion.*

every Man's Conscience, as in the sight of God.

They must shew all due *Affection* to the Souls of those with whom they are entrusted; and should do every thing with the tenderest regard to their Welfare and Salvation.

They must exercise great *Patience*, in order to win and recover those, who are under Temptations and Disgusts.

They must be *Exemplary* for their honest, and faithful Conduct; and for their harmless, and good Conversation.

They must be earnest and constant in *Prayer*, both publick and private, as the Occasions and Desires of any of their Charge may require.

And to complete all, they must *give up themselves* to these things, and be very *diligent* in them, as far as they have Ability and Opportunity.

Under these Heads, are included the Duties incumbent on the Ministers of Religion. What relates to Discipline does not belong to *them only*, but to *others* that must also concur with them: In which the greatest Care and Contrivance should be used, rather to *heal* that which is *lame*, than to cut it off, or turn it out of the Way. But such as cannot be reclaimed, ought to be cast out.

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I shall close this Account of the Dutie of *Superiors*, by putting all Those in mind who are possess'd of *any Excellencies* and useful Talents above others, to carry it respectfully, and with a Concern to do good to their *Inferiors*.

Those that excel in *Wisdom* and Furniture of Mind, should condescend to use their inward Abilities for the *Benefit*, and not for the *Hurt*, of such as are less prudent and knowing.

They that are raised above others by their *Wealth* and Estates, ought to shew the same Courtesy in using their outward Talents, so as to support, and comfort, and promote the useful Undertakings of those that are in meaner or necessitous Circumstances.

There is a Pity and Courtesy due from those that are at *Ease*, toward them that are in Affliction and Trouble: This implies both *Sympathy*, and *Help*.

They that have attained to more eminent *Piety* and Goodness than others, should exercise and shew all their *Graces*, not so as to draw Admiration to themselves, but so as that "others seeing their good Works" may glorify their heavenly Father."

To add no more, the *Aged* should carry it with all Courtesy and Goodness to the *Younger*; endeavouring to instill wise Counsels, by the gentlest and most condescending Methods.

IV. The next social Virtue is *Submission*. Preferences, and Subordinations, are necessary to the well-being of all Societies whatsoever. And there cannot be a fulfilling of all *Righteousness*, without due *Subordinations* of Persons one to another. These must be guided by God's Ordinance and Appointment; "Submitting your selves one to another in the *Fear of God**."

Submission must be shewn to Rulers, and *Magistrates*. The several Branches of it are as follow.

We must *honour* and *esteem* those that have the Rule over us.

We must shew all *Respect* and *Humility*, both in speaking of them, and to them, and in our whole Carriage and Behaviour.

We must live in Subjection to their *Laws* and *Orders*.

We must *fear* and reverence them, on account of their Power to punish.

And we must chearfully support their Dignity and Authority, by proper *Contributions* in the way of Taxes or Tribute.

By these Submissions, the Order of Kingdoms and *political Families* is preserved, and their Happiness promoted, if the *Ruling*

* Ephes. v. 21.

Powers at the same time truly and courteously perform their Duty as before described.

Again; there must be Submission in all the Members of *private Families* to their proper Head, and a Subordination to one another.

There is a Modesty and Subjection which the *Wife* owes to her Husband. *Children* are required to honour both their Parents. And *Servants* are commanded to be obedient to their Masters in all things.

The Submission of the *Wife* to her Husband is very clearly stated in Scripture, under the following Particulars.

Softness of Speech, and Submission of the Tongue.

Subordination of the Will and Temper.

Supporting and forwarding a Man's Usefulness, and good Undertakings.

Not consuming his Time and Spirit, by Clogs and Oppositions.

Contriving for his Health, and the comfortable Disposal of Family Affairs.

Being entirely faithful, both to his Person, and his Interest.

And studying that Behaviour which is most winning, and shall testify the Constancy of a Wife's Respect.

The Submission and Obedience of *Children* to their Parents, is required in the fifth Commandment, under the Phrase of *honouring* them. This Subjection, or Honour, includes the Particulars under named.

A due Esteem, and reverential *Fear*.

A desire to be *approved* of Parents, and an affectionate Observance of them.

Humble receiving their Parents *Instructions*.

Taking well their *Corrections* and *Reproofs*.

Being obedient to their *Orders*.

Consulting Parents, and seeking to carry a parental *Blessing* along with them, when Providence calls them to take leave of Home; Whether it be in Marriage, or other Settlements.

And still, Children are to honour their Parents after their living separate, by a respectful *Carriage* whenever they meet, and by a constant *Affection*.

Maintenance also is an Honour due to Parents, if the Circumstances of Children can allow it, and the Necessities of Parents require it.

Tenderness for them in *old Age*, is but a just Requital of their tender Care of Children in their infant State.

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The Obedience and Submission required of *Servants*, stands thus in the Word and Law of GOD.

They must be careful to understand, and obey the *Orders* of Them they serve, and to follow their good *Examples*.

They must be as diligent and faithful when a Master is *absent*, as when present.

They must keep up a constant reverential *fear* of Offending.

This must be accompanied with a hearty *Good-Will*, and desire of promoting a Master's Interest.

And a good Servant must be *faithful* in every thing committed to his Trust.

These are the Branches of Submission which GOD has ordained for preserving the Order, and promoting the Welfare of private Families.

Further; this *Submission* must be practised in the Family and Kingdom of Christ: That is, in *Churches* and *religious Societies*. The very same Subjections and Subordinations are required here, that are enjoined in Societies natural and civil.

High *Esteem*, and *Reverence*, are required to the Ministers and Pastors of the Church of Christ.

They are to be respectfully *consulted*; and should be honour'd, both in Words and Actions.

The

144 *Of Submission to every Superior.*

The things they teach, according to the Word of God, are to be *observed* and obeyed.

And the Honour of *Maintenance* suitable to their Stations, is due to the Ministers of Religion, as well as to the civil Powers.

Once more: There is a Submission due to Men of all Ranks, that are endued with extraordinary *Gifts* and *Talents*, and that have the Goodness to employ them for the Benefit and Service of others.

Great Deference and Observance should be shewn to those who excel in Wisdom and Knowledge: Not breaking the Attention which we see given to them; nor loosening and sinking the Esteem and Affection which makes any one disposed to learn of them.

Those that are wise-hearted for *useful Inventions*, are to be honoured with due Praise, and Encouragement, and all proper Assistance.

Those that are *rich* and *great*, should have our submissive Salutations. And where their Estates and Interest in the World are used for a Common-good, and to promote the Practice of Virtue and the Credit of Religion, the most *inward* Esteem and Honour is due to them, as well as outward *submissive* Salutations.

But

But indeed the greatest Submission and Veneration is due to *eminent Piety*, and to the steady Promoters of Religion in the World. We should study to fall in with, but never to blow upon, their good Proposals and Designs. And we should do all we can both to copy after, and recommend, their good Examples.

To close the Account of this Virtue of *Submission*; the Younger ought to honour and respect the *Aged*. Their Speech should be first heard, and their Experience first consulted, when the Young are transacting with the hoary Head. And though no mean and implicate Subjection is due to Age, any more than to civil Authority, Wealth, or Learning; yet a candid Subjection is due to their Judgments and Advice, so far as we ourselves can make it appear reasonable and fitting.

If these things are understood aright, and observed, we shall not neglect that part of *Righteousness* which lies in the several Instances of *Submission*.

V. We are to consider *Gratitude* as a social Virtue, distinct from the Virtues foregoing; but only distinct, as it is a Compound of them *all*, and a Means of adding greater Strength and Force to each of them.

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For instance ; Gratitude is *Justice*. To be grateful, is the most just and equitable thing in the World ; but then it also *heightens* Justice, and makes it more diligently and delightfully practised.

Gratitude, in some Cases, may be the genuine Workings of *Love* and *Charity* ; but then again it *encreases* the Charity, and makes it more unwearied.

Gratitude in a Superior, may be only a practising of the Rules of *Courtesy* ; and in an Inferior, it may be no more than to practise all the Rules of *Submission* ; but then the Duties on both sides, are practised with more *Steadiness*, and with better *Acceptance*, than otherwise they would be.

To be sensible of a *Benefit* or an Obligation, and to exert one's self in proper *Returns*, is Gratitude. And every Act of Justice, and Charity, and good Government, and Obedience, that is done upon this Principle, and with a grateful Temper, has something in it which *heightens* the Act, and adds to the moral Character, or the Virtue of him that does it. For he does not only fulfill a Rule of Duty and Justice, but he does it with the Spirit of *Thankfulness* too, which must needs encrease the *Value* of it both to God and Man.

Beside all this, the full Notion of Gratitude carries in it things *generous*. It will study to go *beyond* the bare Rules of
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 Duty,

Duty, and to return one Obligation so far, as to create another; and so the Gratitude is thrown upon different Persons by turns. In Gratitude the following things are included.

A careful *Observation* of Benefits conferred, or Kindness shew'd, that they do not pass neglected, nor are taken for things of course.

A true *Value* and *Esteem* of the Spirit, and Principles, from which such Favours flow, interpreting them in the best manner.

A *Disposition* to make suitable *Returns*, and rejoicing in the *Opportunities* of doing so, and a seeking to *exceed* the Benefits received.

A vowing and *engaging* to make grateful Returns, when the Opportunity of doing so is not actually in our Power.

And preserving this Temper of Mind with great *Steddiuess*, not knowing how to lay it aside: accounting that an *evil Nature* that goes contrary to it, and a *blessed Nature* that is unwearied in it.

He that is thus watchful to observe every Favour bestowed; and to set a Value and Esteem upon it; and to make suitable Returns; and to long and resolve to do so, when it is not actually in his Power; and to maintain this Temper of Mind, in spite of all that would oppose or spoil it; will find

more Ease in practising the other social Virtues, than can be imagined by those that are of an ungrateful Make.

VI. There is another virtuous and good Disposition of Mind that is necessary in social Life, and which completes the Account of living righteously; and that is, to *live peaceably* with all Men.

Our Religion requires this, in very strong Expressions: As far as *is possible*, and as much as *lieth in us* *. If it be *possible*, try all your Skill and Interest to make and keep *others* quiet about you: However, as much as *lieth in you*, be sure to preserve the peaceable State and Temper of your *own* Souls.

Peaceableness thus considered, necessarily includes the other social Virtues. Because all *Injustice* is a direct Breach of Peace. And without *Charity* it cannot be preserved; while the Sins of Men, or their Wants and Troubles, or their Differences in Religion, are uttering continual Occasions of Uneasiness and Offence. A neglect of *relative Duties*, either in Superiors, or Inferiors, will also destroy our Quiet and Harmony. And with all the rest, *Ingratitude* adds to every Provocation, and gives as great Disquiet as any thing.

* Rom. xii. 18.

But

But yet, there is something in a Temper that is *sovereignly peaceable*, which prevents the *ill Effects* of many Departures from other Virtues, and greatly *facilitates* a return to them; and it promotes the more *calm* and *steady Practice* of them.

This Virtue of Peaceableness consists in such things as these, *viz.*

A studying to bring our *own Minds* and Spirits into a settled Tranquillity, and an habitual Disposition *to be quiet*.

Then carrying it with *Calmness* and Quietness toward *all* about us.

Whether we have to do with the gentle, or the froward; whether we are in Business, or in more free and mix'd Conversation; whether we are in civil Societies, or religious Assemblies; whether we have a larger, or lesser Compass of Acquaintance; whether we have to do with those that are of our own Opinions, or that differ from us, be they wiser or weaker than our selves; yet we are to shew all Mildness and Composedness of Temper toward all Men. That is, if it be *possible*, and as much as *lieth in us*, the quiet peaceable Temper must *prevail*; *always prevail*.

To secure this, we must have in our Hearts an unconquerable Benevolence and Good-Will.

We must watch against every reproachful Word, and defaming, provoking Expression. We

We must candidly interpret the Designs and Meanings of others.

We must check Curiosity, and a Medling, *undesired*, with other Peoples Affairs.

We must be quick to heal and soften the Spirits of Men, when they begin to be ruffled and uneasy.

And we must keep our selves as free from Party-Matters, as shall be consistent with a good *Conscience*, and the good of the *Communities* to which we belong.

He that proposeth to live peaceably with all Men, must be a *Catholick* in Religion, and in all the Principles of Humanity; he must be free from Stinginess and *Bigotry*, fond Attachments, and Self-conceit. Yet taking care not to act with an abject Spirit, or with Sloth, or with *Guile* and *Deceit*, upon Pretence of Peace.

And once more, we must always contrive our Affairs so, as to allow *sufficient time*, both for what we propose to do with others, and for competent rest to our selves daily, to fix and strengthen the *Sedateness* of our Passions and Affections.

Thus you have a summary Account of all the *social Virtues*, or Graces, with the particular Duties enjoined in Scripture under each of the six general Heads. I have set down only those things, which there are *express Texts* of Scripture to explain and enforce.

force. They that have Leisure and Hearts to apply their Study this Way, may find out the Passages of Scripture that belong to every Particular. But the comprehensive and summary View of things, that is only intended in this Book, will not allow me to enlarge further in this Place.



SECT. III.

Of living Godly. Or a distinct Account of the divine Virtues, in their several Branches.

AS the Grace that brings Salvation teacheth us to live soberly, and righteously; so doth it also teach us to live godly, in this present World.

The Word used by St. Paul, that we translate godly *, signifies a right worshipping and reverencing the Deity; observing, imitating, trusting him, and submitting to him, as his Perfections and Excellencies require. This is what equally concerns all Christians, in the different Places, or Ages, where their Lot is cast.

In this present World, may be read more agreeably to the Original † in this present

* Εὐσεβός, from εὖ bene, and εἶδω colo; veneror &c.

† ἐν τῇ νῦν αἰῶνι.

Age. And thus it is a Direction to all good Men, to mind the Exercises of Piety in the *Station* where God sets them; and not to fall in with any *fashionable* Ways of Living, that would make them neglect the *Worship* of God, or any Expressions of Duty which they owe to him.

To observe the several Branches of Duty contained under the Head of *living godly*, we must get a Sense of the following things well fixt upon our Hearts and Memories.

1. *Contemplation* of God in the Evidences of his Being, and Display of his Perfections.

2. Due *Acknowledgments* of his *Providence*.

3. *Faith* in him, as revealing himself and his Will to us.

4. *Repentance* of all Evil, and of every Disobedience toward God.

5. *Adoration*, or *Worship*, in all its Parts.

6. *Imitation* of the Being we worship, in all his imitable Perfections.

7. *Resignation*, or Submission to the divine Appointment, in all our Labours, and Sufferings, and in the Delay of expected Blessings.

8. *Hope*, and *Delight* in God, more than in any earthly Enjoyments.

9. *Fidelity* and *Trust*, through all the Changes of Life, and to the End of it.

10. A

to 10. A continual *waiting* for the Summons and Order of God, to attend him in the World of Spirits; there to be judged, and disposed of, according to his most wise Constitution of things in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In these things, together with *Fear* as explain'd in the former part of this Book, we have a full View of the *divine Virtues*. By carefully attending to the Particulars included under each of these Heads, we may soon take in the whole *Compass* of our Duty to God, in this present Life.

The First thing in a godly Life, is, the Contemplation of God.

The Foundation and Substance of all Godliness, lieth, in a Tendency of the Mind toward God, and a Readiness to think of him upon all Occasions.

This includes in it a careful and diligent Attention to the Proofs and Evidences of his *Existence*. "He that comes unto God, must believe that *he is*." This Truth is obvious from the whole Frame of the World in general; and from the Formation of every particular Creature. The Order of things, and the Ends which they are made to serve, most clearly prove a most wise Contrivance and Design. The whole

Scene from Earth to Heaven is full of God.

But as all other Evidences of a supreme and most perfect Mind, owe their Reason and Force with us, to a Consideration of the Nature and Operations of our own *Souls*; so it may be proper to fix our Thoughts here a while, in order to render all other Contemplations of God more clear and profitable.

The use of the *Understanding*, and the great and lasting Effects produced by it, plainly shew that *Thought* and *Mind* (tho' invisible) is the most real, and powerful *Cause*, of the noblest Works and Motions in this World.

To this Principle of Thought and Contrivance in the *Mind*, we owe the forming of Kingdoms, and Societies; the moving of Fleets, and Armies; the guiding them by special Orders and Directions; the executing things over a whole Country, by the Force of Laws; the erecting fine Buildings, and populous Cities; producing innumerable useful Arts, and Manufactures; and in short, all the stupendious Changes and Revolutions that are in the World.

We know it is Thought and Mind, an *invisible Cause*, that produces all this.

And

And when we carefully study over one or more of these things, every Man is conscious, that in one respect, or other, there are *Understandings superior* to his. For wherever any *Mind* discovers greater *Excellency* of Thought, and Design, than it hath it self; in a wise suiting, proportioning, and connecting things, to answer a great and valuable *End*; it esteems and honours such Minds or Understandings as more knowing, or more vigorous, or some way more accomplished than itself.

Thus rising from one *Degree* of Understanding, to another, we easily come to conceive of a *Mind* infinitely exalted. And, by the Order and Disposal of things, both in Heaven and Earth, we see a *Contrivance*, and *Compass* of Thought, and Vigour, beyond all finite and limited Understandings whatsoever. This Mind we cannot but conceive of as endued with *every Perfection*, and good Quality, that renders it fit to be *supreme*. This, we call God.

And when the Mind of Man hath thus found out God, *our* Reason and Understandings perpetually *tend* to that Reason and Understanding which is *supreme*, and fits Sovereign of all others.

Here we see, that in the very Principles of Man's Formation, his Mind has a Tendency toward God. True Godliness, therefore, which brings a Man rightly to remem-

ber his Creator, must restore the Understanding to its first natural uncorrupted Motion toward the Deity *. This makes it a clear and just Observation, as some have express'd themselves, "That it is not more certain, " heavy things fall downward, and light " things fly upward, than it is that Mind " and Understanding, properly, (and if not " abused and hindered) would move toward " the All-perfect Mind."

The next Work in the Contemplation of God, is to acquaint our selves with his glorious Attributes and Perfections: And to walk, as having these ever before us: And to refer to God in all things, as our continual Spectator, and as both a Rewarder and a Punisher. So much hath been said before on these Particulars †, that I shall not enlarge further; but barely mention those Excellencies which are to be the unwearied Subjects of our Contemplation.

He that truly contemplates the divine Being, must think of him as Self-existent; Eternal; Infinite; Unchangeable; All-Sufficient; the Ever-blessed God, Most Holy; Wise; Powerful; Just; and Good. He is a Being that cannot lie, or deceive; nor by any means be deceived. The universal Governor and Lord.

* Omnis Intellectus tendit in Deum.

† See Chap. II. Of the *Perfections* of God.

These are Characters which belong to the supreme and *sovereign Mind*. And from these we learn to choose this God, for our God; and to know that there is *no other* God beside him.

Our Contemplation of him must be such, as to study the Descriptions given of him in his *Word*, with the closest Attention.

To consider his Perfections also as they appear variously, or unitedly, display'd in his *Works*.

And to take special Notice, of all the Discoveries that he makes of himself in any special Acts of Government, and in the Dispositions of his Providence. But that leads to the next Branch of living godly in this present World.

II. There must be due Acknowledgments of a divine Providence.

By a due Acknowledgment I mean the having an undoubted Persuasion that there is a Providence, both general and special. Thereupon studying it, as the greatest reality; and keeping up a constant Sense of the Dependence of all things upon its most wise and steady Administration, daily committing our selves and our Affairs to the Conduct of it.

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It is most undoubted, that there is a Government or Providence of God over all Nations, and all things in general.

It is also certain, that all the *Methods* of Government which are necessary to secure the Being and Order of a *Kingdom*, must belong to this extensive Dominion of God: "For the Kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the Nations. * "

Our assured Belief of a general Providence, arises from such a way of thinking as this: namely, That before the making of this World, it was necessary there should be an *exact Settlement* of the Order of Things, in their Dependence and Operations one upon another, that they might be formed and placed according to such a *Plan* or Settlement.

Such an Order being once settled by the wise and eternal Counsels of Heaven, there must be a fixing upon *proper Measures* for maintaining and preserving that appointed Order and Course of Things.

These Counsels and Measures must extend to the various Trains of *Causes* and *Effects* throughout the whole Creation, directing, or controlling them, according to the Nature of the things themselves, and

the Perfection of him that governs. By all which, some wise and great *Ends* are to be secured, that are worthy of divine Government.

And tho' every single Person, or Agent, may not see their particular Interest or Concern in the Disposals of Providence; yet the general Measures and Designs of it, are nevertheless to be acknowledged, and yielded to, with an adoring Submission.

But then further; he that will live godly, must have a constant regard to a special and particular Providence.

This is to be acknowledged in what relates to each particular Life.

Ordering its Supplies:

Defending and rescuing it from Dangers:

Or determining to bring it to a Period. Therefore it is expressly taught in Scripture, that "our *Breath* is in the Hand of God."* And in him we are said to *live*, and *move*, and have *our being*.

Further, a special Providence is to be own'd and studied in God's Disposal of the *Ways* and *Actions* of every particular Person. It is therefore made a grievous Crime in *Belsazzar*, that he did not glorify God as the Being "*Whose all his Ways were* †."

* Dan. v. 23. Acts. xvii. 18.

† Dan. v. 23.

Our Ways are specially ordered by God, as he hath given Laws to direct the constant Course of them. And his Providence hath as great a Concern about these Laws, as about any thing else in the World.

That is, in recording and preserving them:

In propagating the Knowledge of them:

By many very particular Incidencies carrying these Laws from one Place to another; and from one Heart to another:

And also by providential Helps, disposing and assisting Men to obey them.

Again; There is a special Providence in guarding these Laws;

By preventing many Breaches of them:

By limiting the Sins of Men:

Or diverting our Thoughts from Evil, till it has lost its Power, or we have lost our Opportunity of committing it.

And in many Evils, there is a special Providence manifest in bringing Good out of Evils:

Sometimes also in speedily punishing Evil, and sensibly rewarding the Humble and Penitent.

He that is wise, and will observe these things, shall find a very great Variety of providential Incidencies with relation to the Sins of Men.

Yet further: Consider our Ways, as they may respect our *Affairs*, and Circumstances in the World. Here we shall see a *special Providence* in almost every thing that has *sent* a Man in one or other Station, or Business. Namely,

1. In the Time, Condition, and Place of a Person's Birth:

2. In the manner of his Education:

3. In those things that have helped to quicken and strengthen, or to depress and sink a natural *Genius*:

In calling sometimes out of Obscurity to publick *Views*; and that by Occasions unsought, and not before imagin'd.

In setting the *Heart* of one Person upon another, by sudden, but *lasting* Impressions; such as, with secret imperceptible Bands, shall tie one to the Lot of the other;

Or on the contrary, by the ill Usage of Kindred and Friends, a Man's Ways may be turned quite different to the Bias of Education; and he may be carried into strange Parts of the World.

In the several Casualties, that bring People to be acquainted with each other; and that for the Solitary in Families: In those Incidencies that point out Mens *Habitations*; and that bring them into a *prosperous*, or *adverse* State: In all these we have undoubted Proofs of a special Providence.

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If there be such Acknowledgments as a Life of Godliness requires, we shall not be heedless of any of these things.

Once more; There is a very great Variety of special Providences in relation to the Afflictions of Men.

There is no Sort of Calamity or Affliction that befalls us, inward or outward, personal or relative, sudden or continued, from Causes that are known or unknown; but we are directed, in the sacred Scripture, to acknowledge the over-ruling Providence and Government of God.

These different kinds of Afflictions are under the Conduct of a special Providence, in the following Respects.

In God's *suiting* them to the different States of Men, and the Evils they are to correct. The Affliction sometimes being such, as directly to point out the Evil: Either to make it plain to a Man's self, for his Amendment; or to expose it to others, in making him an Example, where his Crimes are known, and he impenitent in them.

A special Providence may be seen also, in measuring and *proportioning* a Correction to the Nature of a Fault, and ordering the Time of its Continuance:

In

In the *Means* and Instruments by which it is brought upon us, or removed from us:

In the *Supports* granted under some Afflictions; and the well-ordered Remissions, Allays, and Helps that are appointed to sustain the Spirit:

In the *Good* that is sometimes visibly produced by Afflictions: And the signal Exercises of *Grace*, with the eminent Improvements of it, in those that truly love God:

In the signal and unexpected *Deliverances* also, that sometimes are brought about; the Seasonableness of them, and the Means by which they are effected, leading Men to write upon them "This is the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our Eyes."

In all these things, the Scripture teacheth us to own a *special Providence*. And tho' it be one of the great Difficulties in a godly Life, to understand the true meaning of some Occurrences and Events; yet Prayer, and Patience, will do much to unravel the greatest Intricacies, and to quiet the Mind till God shall more fully reveal things to us.

These are the main Heads that direct our Study of Providence, and Acknowledgments of it, in our *living godly*.

III. Another Branch of Godliness, is *Faith*. There must be a *Believing* in God, according to that Testimony of things that we have from him, and the Revelation that he makes of *Himself*, and of his *Will*.

There must not only be a Belief of the Existence, and Attributes, and Providence of God, as before: But there must be an *entire Credit* given, to every thing that he is pleased to testify, and make known. Because God hath been pleased to reveal Himself, with the Methods of his Grace and Government, in the HOLY SCRIPTURES; therefore, *Divine Faith* rests upon what is there declared as the *Word of God*.

Particularly: Faith gives *Assent* to the things there affirmed, as certain Truths: And *consents* to the things there commanded, as unquestionable Duty: *Relying* upon the Promises of Scripture, as what shall be infallibly accomplished: Looking also with awful Assurance to the Execution of every *Threatning*: And, in spite of all Opposition, or the contrary Appearance of Things, Faith depends upon God's executing in every Age, and at the end of Time, *All that* which he hath declared shall come to pass.

“ Have Faith in God. Or, Have the
 “ Faith

"Faith of God." Thus stands the Precept in general *1.

Absolute Faith, can no have no other Object but God. For no finite or fallible Creature, can claim our entire believing in him, as God doth. We may and should believe a wise and honest Man, in what he testified; but we must not believe in him, as we are required to believe in God. Because it cannot be said of any other, as it is of Him, "That there is no Mistake or Deceit, no Darkness at all in him."

God is to be considered in the complex Notion of him, when we make him absolutely the Object of Faith. For, as Chrysostom expresseth it, "Faith begins with, and arises from, the Father; it proceedeth to, and with the Son; and is perfected or completed by the Holy Ghost†." To this well agrees that of the Apostle, "Of him, and through him, and to him are all Things ‡."

Now as far as God inspires any Man, and gives sufficient Proof of that Inspiration, so far we believe the Things delivered by him to be the very Mind and Word of God. Above all, we believe in the Man CHRIST

* Mark xi. 22. Ἰστε μέγιστον Θεῶν.

† Πνεῦμα ἀπὸ πατρὸς μὲν ἀρχεται, ἐν υἱῷ δὲ ἵσταται, ἐν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι πληροῦται.

‡ Rom. xi. 36.

JESUS, under the Character of *Mediator* betwixt God and Man. "In whom dwelt "the *Fulness* of the Godhead" truly and really. And being the *Son* of GOD, "he "made known all Things to us that he had "heard of the Father." This he did so fully, clearly, and certainly, as the Things of GOD were never made known by any other. This therefore is the "Commandment of GOD that we should believe on "the Name of his Son JESUS CHRIST*." "There is one Mediator, betwixt GOD and "Men, the Man Christ Jesus†."

To have the *Faith* of GOD according to this Constitution of Things, is to receive JESUS CHRIST as the Mediator of *Light*, and Knowledge; all saving Wisdom being from him:

As the Mediator also, of *Reconciliation*; all Grace and Peace being thro' him:

As the Mediator of *Holiness*; being "created in him unto good Works:"

As the Mediator of *Government* and Dominion; all Things being committed to him of the Father; and put under his Administration:

As the Mediator of *Worship*; "who hath "consecrated for us a new and living Way

* Jo. iii. 23. See before Ch. V.

† 1 Tim. ii. 5. See p. 10, 11, 12.

“ thro’ the Veil that is to say his Flesh : And
 “ He ever liveth to make Intercession for
 “ us :”

Including all these, he is to be received as Mediator of a *new Covenant*, or new Settlement of Religion : The entering into which, by solemn Dedication and Profession, and proving faithful to it, and depending upon God, even to remove Mountains for the Establishment of it, and for the effecting of all that is declared in it, is now the Faith of God.

There must also be a believing in the *Holy Ghost*. Who is the great Agent, under the Mediator, to bring Men into the Christian Covenant and Settlement. It is his Work to make it powerful and spreading in the World, and to render it effectual to all those Purposes, for which such a Dispensation was contrived and ordained.

That we may be rightly instructed and settled in this Faith, God hath been pleased to give us the Gospel of his Son penn’d by *inspired Men*; who were also *Eye and Ear-Witnesses* of the Things they relate to us. Therefore Faith in a subordinate Sense is to be considered as meaning the *Words* of the Gospel, and the *Writings* of the *Apostles*. These are expressly called “ the Faith once delivered to the Saints.”

The *Opinions* of Men concerning the Truths contained in Scripture, and Summaries of Religion drawn from thence, are in a yet lower Sense called the Christian Faith. These are to be respected and used by us, as Means and Instruments to promote the Faith of God, and should be valued in Proportion to their answering that end, and no further.

Throughout the whole, we are to consider Faith as principally consisting in a strong and practical Sense of the very Things themselves that are revealed: So that they have a constant and powerful Influence over us (as some of the Objects of Sense have) whether we formally think of the exact Notions and Descriptions of them, or not. "Faith is the Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen." Till Faith comes to give Substance and Evidence to the things themselves, that are described by Words, those Words have no saving Effect, let them be taken either from divine or human Writings. Nor will our professed Acknowledgments of God, and calling Christ Lord, Lord, and entering ourselves into the Gospel-Covenant, that all avail us, unless our Faith come up to this Description of it. Our Conversation, and our Works

Heb. xi. 1.

of

of Life must be directed and governed by the Faith of God, more than by the Objects of Sense. For "we walk by Faith, and not by Sight; (saith the Apostle) while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen: For the Things which are seen are temporal, but the Things which are not seen are eternal *.

This is the Faith which is necessary to a godly Life: And if the Particulars here set down; are all carefully considered, we shall find the whole Scripture-account of Faith, in this short Compass; set before us; only taking care to add the *Properties* and *Effects* of Faith, which carry us into other Parts of Religion.

IV. He that will live godly, must exercise Repentance toward God.

The great Things which St. Paul testified, were, "Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." These very Sins that are committed against our selves, or our Neighbours, are to be repented of in the Sight of God, because they are Breaches of his Law, as well as the Evils that are committed more directly and immediately against himself.

* 2 Cor. iv. 18. with v. 7.
xx. 21.

The Rules given in Scripture for the right Exercise of this Grace, are either such as respect the *examining considering* part of Repentance; or such as respect the *worshipping* part of it; or such as describe the *Amendment* by which it is consummated; and becomes a Repentance "never to be repented of."

The *examining considering* Part of Repentance, includes two Things: namely, a diligent Search to find out our Sins: And a close serious thinking, of the *Condition* they have brought us into with respect to God.

In acquainting our selves with our Sins, we are to set our Rule [the Commandments of God] before us. And that we may have a more full and distinct View, of what is required, or forbidden, under each Command; it may be requisite to have some *Method of Examination* before us, according to the Order of the Commandments. Several of These we are furnished with in Books of Devotion, very common amongst us. And from the Account this Book gives of the Duties owing to God, our Neighbour, and our selves, we may draw out a *Method of Examination* upon each of these Heads.

Having

The

Having thus enquired what Things are *sinful*, with our Rule before us, we are next to search our *Hearts* and *Ways*, that we may take a particular Account of our *own Iniquities*.

And then we are to set down, or at least to fix our Thoughts upon, those Things that *aggravate* Sin, and heighten the *Guilt* of every Transgression.

This part of Consideration being duly minded, the *other part* will necessarily attend it. That is, to think of the *Condition* Sin has brought us into, with respect to God.

We shall look upon our selves as Creatures most highly *offensive* to God, whilst our Sins are upon us. We shall look upon his Judgments as righteously deserved, and every Moment ready to cut us off.

Then we shall diligently study the Nature of his *Mercy*, and in what way his Pardon may be obtained. This is the melting part of Repentance, that makes the Heart soften and relent under a Sense of its Impieties and Rebellions; to hear God himself *proclaiming* his Readiness to pardon, and the abundant *Goodness* which is in his Nature. “* The LORD, The Lord God, “merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, “and abundant in Goodness and Truth:

* Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

172 *Of Repentance towards God.*

"keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving
"Iniquity, and Transgression, and Sin;
"and that will by no means clear the
"Guilty."

In these two things, principally, the *con- sidering* part of Repentance consists; *viz.*

Examination of our Sin: And
Apprehension of the Mercy of God.

Then follows the *worshipping* Part of Re-
pentance, which includes *three* things:
namely, making humble *Confession* before
God in Prayer; with hearty *Contrition* for
our Sins; and solemn fixed Promises, or
Vows and *Resolutions* to forsake them.

Confession must be made in *general* of the
Evil of Sin, and its Desert, and of our be-
ing guilty before God; and there must not
be the least Attempt to excuse, or hide, our
Faults.

Particular Sins, must be in a *particular*
manner expressed, and acknowledged; to-
gether with the *Aggravations* of them.

Then must we heartily *lament* over every
Instance of Folly, and Disingenuity, and
Rebellion against God. Justifying God,
and glorifying him in his Government, and
in all his Laws; and condemning and griev-
ing our selves, till our Hearts perfectly
loath and detest the Sins we have com-
mitted.

Here-

Hereupon our Vows and Resolutions must be declared, and fixed. We must engage to *forsake* the Evils, for which we profess to have a *Brokenness of Heart*; and to avoid as much as may be all *Company* and *Occasions*, that would draw us into Sin. And we should order and contrive our after-Lives, so as to take quite different *Courses*, and spend our *time* in a different *Method*, to what we had done before.

To the two former Branches of *Repentance*, these three, as they are here stated, must be added; viz.

Confession,
Contrition,
Resolution.

The last and consummating Part of Repentance, is, *Amendment*.

This in general, will carry our *Endeavours* to all things, that we are sensible need *Amendment*.

In particular, our Amendments must be such, by the Grace that is in Christ Jesus, as to cure all *presumptuous* Sinning.

And also to guard against those Disorders which were owing to a want of *Care* and *Method*, in the Conduct of our Selves and our daily Affairs.

Amend-

Amendment, if sincere and hearty, will extend to all *outward Actions* that were amiss.

Yea, it will be carried to our Words, and Thoughts; to our *Temper* and prevailing Dispositions.

And it will put us upon making continual Search after Faults, and Errors, *yet unknown*.

And finally, it will not suffer a Man *willingly to return* to any Evil, that he hath renounced.

All the other parts of Repentance, are for the sake of *This*: And upon this, the Scripture lays the great Stress of *all*.

V. Another very great Branch of *living Godly*, is, *Adoration* or *Worship* in all its Parts.

This is not to be conceived of, *Separately*, from the foregoing Branches of Godliness. For it supposeth, and goes along with Contemplation, Acknowledgments of Providence, Faith, and Repentance. But together with all these, it is necessary to have a distinct Notion of *Worship*, according to the Appointment and special Ordinances of God in *Scripture*.

The first and great Rule here laid down, is,

is, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,
"and him only shalt thou serve †."

The *Maker* of Heaven and Earth, Fa-
ther, Son, and Spirit, is the *sole* Object of
religious Homage and Adoration: He whose
Name alone is *Jehovah*, the sovereign
Lord of the whole World.

We must not worship any thing *besides*
him; not even the most excellent of cre-
ated Beings, visible or invisible.

We must not worship any thing together
with him, as a visible *Image* and Represen-
tation of him.

We must not worship him as a *strange*
and *frightful* God, but as *our* God, by
special Relation, and the greatest Endear-
ments.

The next great Rule of Worship is,
"God is a Spirit, and they that worship
"him, must worship in Spirit and in
"Truth *." Our Worship must be suited
to the Nature and Perfection of God, as
much as may be.

It must therefore engage our *Understand-*
ings, and our most fixed *Attention*.

It must be performed with our *Wills*, and
Inclinations, and best *Affections*.

It must be with a *pure* and *inoffensive*
Conscience.

† Luke iv. 8.

* John iv. 24.

It must be in the constant Exercise of our *Memories*, and recollecting Capacity.

And it should be with pious *Motions* and *Excitations* of the *Passions*; godly Wonder, and Astonishment, and Care, and Tears, and Veneration, and Desire, and Hope, and Joy, and Zeal. In short, *Admiration*, *Awe*, *Reverence*, and *Love*, in all their wisest Exercises, are required in one or other part of divine Worship.

To proceed: We are directed to worship with our *Bodies*, as well as our *Souls*.

We are to go with our *Bodies*, and *present* them before the Lord.

We are to shew our Reverence and Homage by our bodily *Motions*, and by the *Posture* of Respect.

Standing.

Bowing.

Kneeling.

There must be a serious engaging and employing the *Senses*. The *Eye*, and *Ear*, should be all Attention to the Word of God, and the Offices of Devotion. And in our sacramental Solemnities, we are required to *touch* and take the Bread of Life, and to *taste* that the Lord is gracious.

* John iv. 24.

† Luke iv. 4.

Our *Voices*, and *Tongues*, should be employed to pray, and praise ; to utter and recite the Word of God ; and to declare his gracious, and his glorious Works.

Our *Hands* also should be lifted up toward Heaven, or stretched out to do Good. They are to be used in laying our Offerings upon God's Altar, and in liberal Contributions to works of Piety and Charity. But this belongs to the next Branch of Worship.

The Scripture further commands, that "Thou honour the Lord with thy *Substance*, and with the first Fruits of all thine Increase*."

All the Directions for Sacrifices of Cattel, and Offerings of Incense, and the Fruits of the Earth, and those things in which so much of Mens Wealth and Substance formerly lay, contain the very same Demand in effect, with the giving of so much Money. And therefore the Contributions of Money for the Poor, and to support the Worship and Ministers of the Gospel, are called *Sacrifices*, and an *Odour* of a *sweet Smell*. As those things that were laid on God's Altar, were graciously accepted in old Times, when offered with a pious Mind, and as God required ; so our pious and charitable Contributions now, are said to be

* Prov. iii. 9.

178 *Of worship with our Substance.*

acceptable, and well-pleasing to God, when proceed from a believing, obedient, and willing Mind.

There are many Places of Scripture, that point out the *Proportion* of our Substance, which ought statedly to be devoted to the Honour of God.

There are plain Directions for appropriating the *Tenths* of all our Increase to Services divine. But the Rules by which Christianity would have us to act in this Matter, plainly carry us *beyond* such a Confinement; tho' at the same time, it would have an orderly separating of some such *stated part* of what God blesses a Man with, as if it were a Branch of *every Lord's-Day's Worship* and Service. 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

The Gospel would teach us to spend *that* in Works of Piety, and *Charity*, which we see many others spend upon their *Lusts*. "Flee youthful Lusts, but follow Charity."

It would have us not to lay up a *Treasure on Earth*, that should be compared with the Treasure we lay up *for Heaven*.

It would have us rather to exceed on the *bountiful Side*, than to consult with *Covetousness*.

It would neither have us to *save sparingly*, nor to slacken our *Diligence* in bountiful Actions.

The Scripture also points out the *Ways* in which God would have that part of our Substance now to honour him, that is devoted to his Service, under the Gospel. Namely,

To support and encourage the *publick Offices* of Religion, and provide for the *Ministers* of the Gospel; counting those that are faithful, and laborious, *worthy* of double Honour.

To relieve the *Poor* and Helpless :

In short "to do good to *all*, but especially to the Household of *Faith*."

The *Persons* that are called upon, thus to honour God with their *Substance*, are People of all *Circumstances*, and of all *Ages*, that are capable of this Service.

Young Men, are required to be Patterns of good *Works*. And aged Men, are to be found in *Charity*. *Titus* i. 2, 7.

They that labour with *their Hands*, should give to him that needeth. *Eph.* iv. 28.

Yea, to give out of our Want or from one's own *Necessity*, is applauded in the Temple-Service. *Mark* xii. 41, &c.

And those that abound, and are *Rich*, stand solemnly charged to be *rich in good Works*. *1 Tim.* vi. 17, 18.

Thus we see how fully, and distinctly, this part of Homage and Obedience to God is insisted on.

Further; the Scripture hath also directed us in what *Places*, God would have our Homage and Worship paid to him. Namely,

In his *Church*, or in the Congregation of his People, "Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together."

In private *Houses* and Families. So "Cornelius prayed in his House, and gave much Alms."

In our *Closets*: As our Saviour says, "When thou prayest enter into thy Closet." And there the Offerings of our *Substance* should be contrived and settled.

And St. *Paul* would have Men to "pray and lift up holy Hands, *every where*:" And to do good with *every Opportunity* that offers.

To proceed: We must observe God's Appointment, in the *Times* of Worship.

We are required to keep holy *one whole Day* in *seven*, that it may be stately spent in the Worship of God, and the Services of Religion. The Observation of the *LORD'S-DAY* is of the highest Necessity to promote, and improve, a Life of Godliness. The Neglect of it, and prophaning it, is a certain Mark of Mens Contempt of God.

"Remem-

"Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it
"Holy."

But in living godly, it is not sufficient to worship God only once a Week ; we are also directed to pay our Homage *daily*. "Every Day will I bless thee," saith the Psalmist. And again, "I have called daily
"upon thee."

We have special Direction and Example for worshipping *twice* a Day ; that is, *Morning* and *Evening*. "It is a good thing to
"shew forth the loving Kindness of God
"in the Morning, and his Faithfulness
"every Night."

Special *Days* and *Seasons* are likewise to be kept, when extraordinary *Changes* in publick or private Affairs, call for special and extraordinary Acknowledgments of God. Days of *Fasting* and Humiliation, are ordered, on account of Judgments or Afflictions, felt or feared. And Days of *Thanksgiving* on account of signal Mercies, and Deliverances. And Days of solemn *Vows* and *Engagements* to God, when we enter upon any dangerous or considerable Undertaking.

Once more : In living godly, there must be a complying with all the *Parts* and *Institutions* of divine Worship.

Prayer

Prayer is so great a part of *Worship*, that the House of God is called the *House of Prayer*. This we are directed to practise at all *times*; and in *every thing* to make known our *Requests* unto God.

Thanksgiving is of such Importance, that when the Judge of all the Earth expresses little regard to Sacrifices, and Burnt-Offerings, we are directed to offer unto God *Thanksgiving*. In this Service, *Singing* is more especially recommended as a Branch of *Worship*.

We have many Precepts and Examples to recommend both the *reading* the Word of God, and *bearing* it preached, as a part of religious Homage toward God. True *Worship* will teach Men to hear, and shew all Reverence to the Declaration of God's Mind, as well as to speak their own. And his Orders will be observed, and waited for, from time to time.

Vows also, and Sacramental Dedications, are Parts of God's instituted *Worship*; "Vow and pay unto the Lord your God."

The sacramental *Rites* of Dedication appointed by the Gospel, are only two, viz. *Baptism*, or washing with Water, at our Entrance into the Christian Kingdom; and *feeding*, or rather *feasting* with Christ at his Table.

Baptism

Baptism is appointed wherever the Gospel is preached and received. "Go make
" Disciples of All Nations, baptizing them
" in the Name of the Father, and of the
" Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "They
" that gladly received the Word were
" baptized."

The holy *Communion*, or feeding on and with Christ at his Table, is as expressly required of all the *Subjects* of his Kingdom, as any other thing in Religion. "Take,
" eat; this is my Body which is broken for
" you: This Do in Remembrance of me."
This part of Worship, is a Summary of the *Whole*. It is to be *prepared* for, by careful Self-Examination: To be *attended*, in the Exercise of all Christian *Graces*: And to be followed, with a blameless, useful, pious, exemplary Life and Conversation.

To the Worship of God, the Scripture joins *Swearing* by his *Name*. Solemn Appeals to God in judicial Cases, where Accusations cannot be taken off, no Strifes ended without them, have ever been esteemed very proper and necessary. And also in Contracts, and Engagements to Fidelity.

Oaths are a part of Worship, as they are a solemn publick Acknowledgment of an *all-knowing, heart-searching* God; and a referring



referring to him as the great Judge and *Vindicator* of Truth, and Right, as also the *Avenger* of Injuries and Falshood.

"Thou shalt swear, the LORD liveth, in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteousness; and the Nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory †."

We have Instances of religious Oaths in Scripture, both,

Affertory, and Promisory.

But all profane Swearing by other things, instead of God, and all swearing by his sacred Name in common Conversation, are expressly forbidden by the Word of God.

Before I pass off from this Head, it is necessary to add, That we are taught to worship JESUS CHRIST, both as the Son of God, and as *Mediator* betwixt God and Man. To him Prayers are offered, and Thanks are given, and Glory is ascribed, and Dedications are made, as well as to the Father. Thus we are required "to honour the SON, as we honour the Father."

† Jerem. iv. 2.

III. St. Paul also appeals to him, and uses *his Name* in the way of an Oath.

Finally, in all our Worship we are directed to look for, and depend upon the Assistance of the SPIRIT of GOD. To infuse divine *Light*, and shed abroad divine *Love*, in our Hearts; and to quicken us to the exercise of every Grace, and to engage us to seek *above all things* "the Kingdom of GOD, and his Righteousness."

Thus you have a *summary View* of what is delivered and directed in Scripture, upon this copious Head of *divine Worship*. The various Writings of Men, on this Subject, and on some special Branches of it, are grown to Books innumerable. But he that will mark the *Texts* of Scripture, that belong to each of the Particulars here set down, will be sufficiently acquainted with every thing that ought to be his great *Concern* upon this Head.

VI. Another Branch of living godly is, to *imitate* the Being we worship.

"Be ye therefore Followers*, or Imitators of God, as dear Children." As a Child naturally takes after the Father; and a Child

* *Mixed* Eph. v. 1.

dearly beloved, and truly affectionate, will doubly study to walk in the Father's Steps; so should we imitate God, as dear Children.

We must not affect to imitate God, as his *Enemies* do, and as the fallen Angels do: *Perversely* lifting up our selves, as if we were under no Controul, and had no Lord over us, or were capable of arriving at a State of Independence: The Dominion, Self-sufficiency, and absolute Power of God, are things infinitely above us. To pretend a Likeness to these, as St. *Austin* observes in his *Retractions* †, "is like a " Servant fleeing from his Lord, and following a Shadow, vitiously and *perversely* " imitating Dominion and Liberty." So the Devil (as the same Writer elsewhere observes) would needs imitate God; not being willing to remain under his Power and Government, but setting up for a Power opposite to his ‡. Our Imitation must be the Reverse of this, and like that of dear Children. Not affecting to live without our heavenly Father, or to set up for a Power and Authority like his; but to be *subject* to him, and to copy after his Example in all those things, which he proposeth to us, for our Imitation.

† *Retractionum* Lib. II. Cap. VI. secundum Edit. Benedictic.

‡ *Ibid.* Tom. V. p. 552.

God would have us to aim at the same kind of Happiness and Blessedness with that which he enjoys. A Happiness that is *intellectual* and *spiritual*; that does not lie in things *without* him, but in the Wisdom, and Goodness, and exact Order and Consistency of his own Mind. He would have us to imitate him, in a like ordering and possessing our *own Souls*.

This is to be done by framing our Tempers in the general, according to those *exalted Views* which we have of the *Perfection* of our heavenly Father, "that we may be perfect as he is perfect." Not being governed by human Passions and Provocations, or by fleshly and worldly Lusts; but studying the Capacity and Perfection that our *thinking Powers* are capable of, and endeavouring to bring them as near to the Perfection of the great Parent-Mind as possibly we can.

We are to be *created* after God, i. e. after his Image and Likeness, in *Righteousness* and *true Holiness*.

He that hath the Hope of being like God, in his future glorious Appearance with Christ, "purifieth himself even as he is pure." He will study to have a Mind free from Falshood, Guile, and every evil Intention, or corrupt Affection, because there is no such impure Mixtures in the Mind and Thoughts of God.

This Imitation of God Will have an Eye to every thing that He accounts holy. "It is written, be ye holy, for I am holy."

It will make us ever careful, to keep to exact Truth and Justice, because God is righteous in all his Ways, a God of Truth is He.

And because God specially requires us to copy after his Mercy and Goodness, therefore this will be ever upon the Heart of one that imitates him as a dear Child should do.

To be patient and forbearing, because of God's Forbearance and Long-suffering.

To be compassionate and pitiful, because the divine Nature glories in tender Mercy.

To be ready to forgive, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

To communicate freely of our good things, because God freely gives all good things to them that ask him.

Yea, to do good to them that hate us, because our heavenly Father showers down his Blessings on the just and on the unjust.

Add to all this, that because God fainteth not, neither is weary, in any of his Works of Righteousness, or Beneficence, therefore we should not be weary or faint in our Minds. He cannot prove inconstant, or unfaithful; and therefore we should not allow our selves to be so.

That

That we may be the more effectually taught and engaged to imitate God in these things, he sent his own Son into our World, and into our Flesh; who became a perfect Pattern and Example to us, of all these imitable Excellencies of the divine Nature.

And because we could not learn from the Nature of God, (who is a Spirit,) how we should use our Bodies; therefore JESUS CHRIST, by his taking a Body, has taught us how to act in, and govern the Flesh. That is, by denying the Body, and keeping it ever in Subjection; and making it an Instrument of shewing forth spiritual Excellencies, and Virtues; and yielding it to such entire Obedience to the Will of his heavenly Father, that he became obedient to Death. In such a Management of the Body "he hath left us an Example, that we should walk in his Steps." Of which, more under the next Head.

But be sure to live mindful of this; that a godly and christian Life, is a Life spent in Imitation of God, and CHRIST.

VII. In living godly, there must be continual *Resignation to God*. By which is meant Submission to the divine Appointment, in all our Labours, in all our Sufferings,

ings, and in the Delay of expected Blessings.

Submission to God in all our Labours, is commonly called *active Obedience*. Submission in our Sufferings, and under Calamities, is called *passive Obedience*. Submission during the Delay of expected desired Blessings, the Scripture describes by *patient waiting* for God: That is, staying his time, and resigning to his *Way* and *Manner* of accomplishing things for us. All this is sometimes described, in the Explication of *Patience*.

Patience in our *Labours*, or Submission to God in our *active Obedience*, includes the following things, *viz.*

A careful *Enquiry* after every thing that God would have us to do; desiring that our Obedience may extend to *all* his Commandments.

Taking our Work orderly, and attending to every Duty in its proper *Place*, and in the *Method* he prescribes.

Doing every good Work with due *Deliberation*, and concern to do it *well*, and acceptably to our great Lord; not shewing an *Aversion* to any thing He requires, or doing it *any How*, merely to get it over.

Humbly *going on*, as our Strength, and Capacity, and Opportunity admit; and pursuing our Labours *kindly*, though we find

find some Difficulty in them, and are able to make but very *slow* and *gradual* Advances.

Continually acknowledging our *Insufficiency*, without fresh Supplies of Grace and Help from God; and keeping ever in the Frame and *Temper* of one that accounts himself, at best, to be an *undeserving, unprofitable* Servant.

Yet in the best manner we can, still *persevering* in the way of our Duty, "bringing forth Fruit with Patience, and enduring to the End."

And we must not *grudge*, though the Day and Time of our Toil and Labour should be *longer*, or more *difficult* than that of others.

Patience in *Sufferings*, or Submission to God in all *passive Obedience*, implies as followeth. Namely,

Taking our Afflictions and Calamities with *silent Yieldings*, considering them as the Fruit of Sin, and the just Consequence of Disobedience to God.

Therefore, *humbling our selves* under the Hand of God; and confessing our Ill-deserts; and that every Punishment in this World is short of what our Sins deserve.

Studying the particular *Errand* of every Affliction, and being desirous it should *continue* till it has gained the *End* God would have

have to be accomplished by it: Rather choosing to submit to any Correction, however sharp, or long, than to be *let alone* under the Power of Sin, and to lie under the Displeasure of God.

Learning to give up our *own Wills*; and to get rid of all eager *Wishes*, and violent *Affections*; that we may take up our *Rest* wholly, in that which *pleaseth* God. Carrying our Submissions to God so far, as to *bless* his correcting Hand, and to *kiss* that *Rod* that cures our passionate Eagerness, Perverseness, and Folly.

Looking upon all the Losses, or Pains, we endure, as not worthy to be compared with what CHRIST underwent for our sakes, who "though He was a Son, yet he learnt Obedience by the things that He suffered."

True Patience will teach us also to receive Afflictions and Sufferings from *Men* with all *Meekness*, as well as those that come more immediately from God; equally submitting to the divine Permission or Appointment, whatever *Hand* or *Tongue* be the Instrument of afflicting us.

Once more, Christian Resignation lies much in a quiet Expectance of a future happy state, after our Patience has had its perfect Work; considering that these light and momentary Afflictions, are *not worthy to be compared* with the Glory that CHRIST hath

hath purchased for us, and if we are *faithful to Death*, hath promised to bestow upon us.

In all these things resigning to the *Wisdom* of God, and not merely to his Will and Authority; believing his Disposal to be wisest and best; and that his Declarations and Promises are true, though we cannot in some Cases discern the Reason of such an *End*, and such *Means* being connected, nor can imagine how some *Promises* should be made good. *Patience*, my Soul! *Patience*, and what thou knowest not *now*, thou shalt know in a *little time*.

Patient waiting for God, or Resignation to him during the *Delay* of expected Blessings, hath the Particulars following contained in it, *viz.*

An absolute Submission to that *sovereign Dominion*, which God hath over all his Creatures; and by which, the Time and Circumstances of bestowing his Favours, may rightly and fitly be determined.

A Dependance upon the Wisdom, Goodness, and other Perfections of God, to fix upon the *best* Time, and the *most advantageous* Circumstances, to increase the worth of his Favours and Blessings to us, and to make us more happy in the Enjoyment of them.

Not indulging any *quarrelsome*, or vain and *voluptuous* Dispositions, while the LORD delays his coming.

Keeping up a *watchful*, *prayerful*, *expecting* Temper, though we find our selves oft mistaken or disappointed; and though others grow weary of waiting with us, or laugh at and despise our Continuance in *Ways* that appear so little to answer Expectation.

Finally, looking for the most full and perfect Accomplishment of all that concerns a real Christian, in and by *Death* it self. To yield our selves aright to the Will and Wisdom of God in our *Dissolution*, finishes and perfects our Resignation to him in this World. This will be considered as a Head by itself.

VIII. Another Branch of living godly is to *hope*, and *delight* in God, more than in any earthly Enjoyments.

I put these two together, because *Hope* is one of the most *delightful* Affections of the Mind. Hope is the Support and Guide of the Soul in all its *Patience* and *Resignation*. It is the Hope we have in God, that draws our *Imitation*; that animates our *Worship*, and Devotion; that kindles, and carries on, our *Repentance*; that always accompanies saving *Faith*; and that keeps our Minds in a due Frame for *contemplating* the divine Per-

Perfections, and for acknowledging a divine *Providence* in all our Ways. And all these do back again excite and encourage *Hope*.

This Grace must not therefore be looked upon *only* as a great *Happiness* to Them that have it; but it should be studied, and endeavoured after, and excited in every Soul as a *Duty*; being as much a Duty, as any other Grace whatsoever.

Our Hope must be taken off from *other things*, that it may be principally and ultimately fixed on God.

The things hoped for from such a Being, should be *altogether good* and excellent; such as are suitable, and fit for him to give; and such as He hath actually *promised*, or affords us sufficient Reason to think he will give. Otherwise our Hope is nothing but a *vain Presumption*.

The things we hope for must also appear *attainable*, though never so great, or distant; otherwise Hope turns into *Despair*.

A Hope rightly fixed on God, will look through all *Difficulties* and *Oppositions*, as only to be conquered by God, not by our own Strength and Power. Yet

Here it will *abide*, without wavering, and keep the Soul firm and steady.

It is wrought and maintained by Faith in CHRIST, and by the holy SPIRIT, according to the Scripture.

Rejoicing

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Though

Though it may sometimes languish, or be clouded, yet it never *fails* till *Death* it self be overcome. And then, all the Good that is hoped for will be enjoyed, when we shall see God *as he is*, and be for ever secure of all the Joys that are in him, and from him.

In the mean time, it is a Branch of living godly, to *delight* our selves in God, so far as he is now pleased to be present with us, and to communicate himself to us.

Hope, and *Desire*, respect God as absent; *Delight* considers him in those Ways, in which he is *present* with us. Though there is also a *Delight* in hoping, believing, desiring, and worshiping at a Distance, and in every thing that leads to God, and expresseth our *Love* and Duty to him.

Delight is described by some, as the great Master-Bee in the Hive of the Passions, whose Sound and Motions guide all the Rest. This is, therefore, required by God, in order to the Heart's being satisfied and set at ease in other things. "Delight thy self also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the Desires of thine Heart"

This divine Virtue or Christian Grace implies the Particulars following, *viz.*

Setting our *highest* and *best* Affections on the greatest and best of Beings, and on Things *above*.

Renouncing

Renouncing all *sensual* and *sinful* Delights, that would *hinder* our Delight in God, or would carry us into any thing *inconsistent* therewith.

Cleaving to him as the most delightful Object *in himself*. "He is good;" every way good, and to the highest Degree.

Rejoicing in the Communications of his Love and Goodness *to us*. "He does good:" Shining with his *Light* and heavenly Revelation into our Souls; diffusing all the Dispositions of *Goodness*, and a *Peace* that passeth human Understanding, into our Hearts and Consciences; and impressing his *Image* upon us, by making us Partakers of a divine Nature.

Further *Delight* in God will shew itself by taking Pleasure in those Persons, Writings, Offices, and *Institutions* of Religion, that are made the Instruments and Means of our having such Communion with God, and Communications from him.

Neglecting no *Season* or Occasion, willingly, in which we might increase our Delight in this *blessed* Object.

Earnestly longing for fuller and more perfect *Enjoyment* of him.

In these Motions of the Soul toward God, and Satisfactions in him, there is an habitual *Permanency* or *Continuance*. The *Will* has nothing to move it, that is powerful or attractive enough to carry it from
this

this *Center*, though its Tendency toward it commonly prove less regular than ought to be.

Such a Soul cannot bear to have Religion represented, as if *Delight* were wholly banished from it: Or as if its Delights must be fetched from things external and sensible, more than from Thought, and from God the Father of Spirits: Or as if all the Delight that comes from God, must be by extraordinary Evidences and Assurances of his Love. The common Pleasures of Religion exceed all the common Delights of this World.

To close this Head, Delight in God reckons upon an *eternal Abode* with him; and the higher it rises in the Belief of this, the more it hath already of "those Pleasures that are at God's right Hand for evermore."

IX. The next Head to be enlarged on, is to give some account of *Fidelity* to God, and *Trust* in him, without which we cannot live a *godly* Life.

Fidelity consists, in a constant Care to answer the *Obligations* we are under, and to *continue* in the Practice of all the Duties foregoing, throughout all the *Changes* and *Trials* of Life. "Be faithful unto Death," and

“ and I will give thee the Crown of
“ Life.”

To be thus faithful, the following things
are requisite. Namely,

To consider diligently what our Obliga-
tions are, according to the *Relation* in which
we stand to God, and the Transactions
which have passed betwixt Him and Us.

To see that our *Intention* and Meaning be
upright, and agreeable to our *Words* and
Professions.

To keep to our good Intentions and Pro-
mises (unallowed Errors and Frailties ex-
cepted) in all our *Actions*.

To take special care of performing our
Vows, and not to break off from *Covenant*
Engagements. Though we may be guilty
of many *Faults*, yet we should not by these
be carried to *Falseness*, in utterly quitting
that *Covenant* into which we have en-
tered.

Though we have *sworn* to our own *Hurt*,
in some particular Transactions of our Lives;
yet we must not *change*, so as to break any
known Commandment of our God, in flying
from or seeking to make void such Engage-
ments.

We must not so much as *in Heart* depart
from God, thro' *Unbelief*.

Yea, till we die we must not *remove* our
Integrity from us.

Such

Such Fidelity as this, can only be preserved by a firm and continual *Trust* in God. "Trust in him at all times, ye *People*."

To this divine Virtue or Grace, we should be led, by those Graces that are explain'd before. The more we contemplate the *Perfections* of God, the more shall we trust him. Observations and Acknowledgments of his *Providence*, will also greatly promote an humble Dependance. The Exercises of *Faith*, directly lead to Trust: And true *Repentance* will greatly encourage us in it. The right *Worship* of God will strongly excite our Trust: And the *Imitation* of him will strengthen and settle it. *Resignation* will make our Trust constant, and regular, and safe. *Hope*, and *Delight* in God, will carry us to strong Confidence. And if we are faithful to him, we shall have no doubt of his *Promises* and Engagements to us.

Trust in God, thus fixed, will extend to the following Particulars, *viz.*

A Reliance upon him through *Christ Jesus*, to keep our *Souls*, and to perfect that which concerns their Welfare and Happiness.

A cheerful committing our *Bodies* to his Care; to preserve Life, and provide for it, till we have accomplished our Day, and our Work.

Casting

Casting every *Burden* in Life upon God, that he may *sustain* us; and depending on his Word to make all things work together for *Good*.

Setting our Trust in God *above* all other Trusts whatsoever.

In all publick *Revolutions* and Events, that concern either the Kingdoms of this World, or the Churches of *Christ*, we are to trust in God that he *knows* what is best; and will never order or *permit* any thing, but what shall be really best, when considered in all its Circumstances, and all its Consequences.

We must trust him as the *living* God; that is, not only seeing, and knowing, but *acting*. Life is an active thing, and the most perfect Life is the most perfect Action. God doth whatsoever he pleaseth.

Again; our Trust must be such as not to be *moved away* from our Hope, nor to *cast off* our Confidence.

Finally; Though we have a *Sentence of Death* in our selves, yet we should trust in him that *raiseth the Dead*.

The *last Branch* of *living godly*, is, daily Preparation for *Death*. Or a watchful and daily waiting for the *Summons* and Order of God, to attend him in the *World of Spirits*; There to be judged, and disposed of, according

ing to his most wise Constitution of things in CHRIST JESUS our Lord.

To get, and keep, a right Frame and Disposition of Soul for leaving the Body and this World, whenever the Sovereign of Life and Death shall order our Remove, is the finishing part of our *walk with God*.

This includes,
An entire Submission to that Appointment of God, "That Death should pass upon all Men, for that all have sinned."

A numbring *our Days*, that we may apply our Hearts to *Wisdom*; and may chiefly mind those things which will attend us, and make us most happy in the next State of Existence.

An endeavouring to clear our Consciences from all remaining Guilt of Sins, for which we have professed solemn Repentance.

Looking upon our Life, every Day, as at the greatest Uncertainty, and what cannot be ensured for a To-morrow; and in this habitual Expectation, waiting all the Days of our appointed Time, till our Change come.

Committing our selves to the Wisdom and Will of God, to order the *Place*, and all the *Circumstances* of our Death.

Keeping our Accounts as even, and our Spirits as calm, and charitable, and free from

from violent Passions, and the Entanglements of this World, as may be.

Believing and trusting in JESUS CHRIST, (who has conquered Death, and made it his Servant,) to deliver us from the *Curse* and *Sting* of dying, by taking away our *Sins*. Looking to him to receive our Souls into *Paradise*, and to recommend them to his Father's *Mercy* and *Love*. And finally, depending upon him to deliver us from the Power of the Grave, and to change these *vile Bodies* into *glorious Bodies* at the Resurrection of the Just.

Thus I have given you a View of the great Concern of human Life, in all those things that relate to the Fear of God, and keeping his Commandments. This is the Life, that prepares Men to die well. And because the main Business of this dying Life, is to get ready for a future and more lasting State of Existence, therefore should we diligently apply ourselves to the Practice of all the Virtues foregoing, which we are expressly told "the Grace that bringeth Salvation teacheth Men.

To this Point they all bear: To make Death safe, and easy, and happy to us. But, it being a Matter of the last Importance to do that well, which can never be retrieved or remedied if done ill, I shall therefore spend one whole Chapter on this Subject of Preparation for Death.

CHAP.

C H A P. VIII.

Death considered in four general Views of it, with the special Preparations suited to each View.

LET me here entreat the Reader to *re-tire*, when he resolves to take this Chapter into his serious Consideration. Cast off all the Thoughts of this World, and get out of the Reach of every Interruption, and then sit down and think, "What it is to *die*."

It is the Lot, both of young and old, and it is equally uncertain to both. They both know that they are mortal, but They are equally ignorant *When*, or *How*, they shall be dissolved. The Consequences of Death are alike great and awful at every Age. It is the most serious and solemn thing that belongs to our Christian *Warfare*. Death is the last Enemy with which we have to combat; if our Faith and other Graces prove victorious here, our *Triumph* will be everlasting. If we pass right into the *Harbour*, when the last *Storm* comes, we are safe and at rest for ever.

But if we grow careless, and imagine we are out of Danger before we are, we may
perish

perish in the very last Conflict; we may sink within sight of our long desired *Haven*. It is not the *hurrying Thoughts* that Men are thrown into, by a Death-Bed View of Eternity, that will carry them with sufficient Care and Steadiness through the last dangerous Passage. It is not frightened Cries, and a thousand passionate Repetitions of a *Lord have Mercy!* Not sudden Wishes or forced Resolutions, that will serve instead of *steering safely*.

Then shall the *critical Passage* be got through with Security, and Comfort, when we come to it with a Mind that has been inur'd to live *sobriety, righteously, and godly*.

It must, I say, be a Mind that has learnt *Sobriety*, by an habitual *Considerateness* and Attention to things; and is *Humble*, and *Meek*, and *Contented*, and *Prudent*, and of good *Courage*; and has used the Body to *Temperance*, *Chastity*, *Diligence*, and *Mortification* or continual Subjection.

A Mind that has practised *Righteousness*, by carrying it well to those about it, and to all that are specially related; *parting* with them, as it *lived* with them, in *Justice* and *Charity*, in *Modesty* and *Submission*, in *Thankfulness* and *Peace*.

It must also be a Mind filled with divine Thoughts, inured to *contemplate* the Perfections of God, and to acknowledge and study his *Providence* in all Events; it will require

require sound and strong *Faith*, deep and genuine *Repentance*, warm *Devotions*, a Sense of *Likeness* and Agreeableness to God, and the humblest *Resignations* to his Will, with the Exercises of *Hope* and *Delight*, and *Trust* in God, and *Faithfulness* to the last Moment.

Thus should a Mind be furnished and disposed, that would pass securely through Death into Eternity; and thus it may cheerfully commit itself to God as a faithful *Creator*, and a merciful all-sufficient *Saviour*.

These are the Dispositions of Soul, that make its Passage from one World to another safe and easy. To see any one *die* after this manner in the Possession of his *own Soul*, and in taking his Leave of *others*, and in addressing and committing himself to his God, raises a Desire in Beholders to come up to such a Pattern, or even to die in his Place and Stead. How strongly does this carry us into that Wish, "Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my latter End be like his."

But who can be so blind, as not to see that these Dispositions of Soul are not to be gained *on a sudden*? Who, that will allow himself time to think, need be told that he must *live* like the Righteous, in making these things the *great Concern* and Care of *his Life*, if he would *die the Death* of

of the Righteous, and make his happy End.

Without such an *habitual* Preparation for Death as this is, you will have little Heart to set about an *actual* Preparation for it. Or if you should endeavour to get *ready* to meet Death, when you see it *just at Hand*, you will then find so much Work to be done, and your Minds so much unacquainted with the Methods of doing it; and this will throw your Spirits into such a Fright and Disorder; that it is a most unaccountable Presumption, to flatter yourselves with the Hope of preparing well enough for Death in the Hurries of a *sick Bed*, or in a *broken* State of the intellectual Powers.

This Book being written on purpose to shew that the Fear of God and keeping his Commandments is the Concern of our *whole Lives*, it would be quite contrary to the Design of it to enlarge on the Sufficiency of a *Death-Bed Repentance*. I shall only say as to that, The Scripture would have no Creature on this side the Grave to *despair* of Mercy; nor to neglect applying to God through JESUS CHRIST, whenever it becomes truly sensible of its *need* of Mercy, though it should be on the very Brink of Destruction. The Gospel would have Men to know, "That JESUS CHRIST is able to save to the *uttermost* All that come unto God through him." But no Creature

208 *Of Preparation for Death.*

Creature is hereby encouraged to neglect the *living soberly righteously and godly*, upon a Presumption of obtaining Mercy at last without such Dispositions of Soul as are included under those Heads.

No : The Repentance that saves at last, must bring the Soul to a Sense of the absolute *Necessity* of these things. It must be a Repentance that pierces the Heart, with *Pains* more bitter than Death, to think that it is destitute of these Graces and Virtues. A Repentance that produces the most earnest Supplications to God, for Mercy through the Blood of Christ, and for *converting* Grace to make the Mind sober, righteous, and godly. A Repentance that solemnly determines, if the Time past was to be lived over again, the things I have mentioned should be made the chief Concern and Business of Life. And no further can the Repentance of any Man avail him, than as God that knows the Heart, sees and knows his *Sincerity* in professing this. And when this is the Case, it is still a Miracle to make that Soul, on a sudden, what it wishes it had been formed to before, and what a whole Life is little enough to effect and bring about.

This *habitual* Preparation for Death, we may suppose that Man has attained to, who has made it the great Concern of his Life to *fear God and keep his Commandments.*
What

What remains, therefore, is only to shew how a good Man ought to manage at the Close of such a Life, in his *actual* Preparation for a Dissolution.

To proceed with Order and Ease in this Matter, we must set Death before us in the principal *distinct* Notions of it; and then take account of the *special* Preparatives that are suited to it in each View. He that throws the Notions of Death *confusedly* together, will be *confused* in his Preparations for it; but take them *separately*, and we shall then more exactly both discern and practise the preparatory Duties.

The great distinguishing Views and Notions of Death are these *Four*. Namely, to consider it,

As it is a *leaving* this World, and all things in it.

As it is a *finishing* our State of *Trial*, and setting the *Seal* to our Characters.

As it turns the *Body* to *Corruption*, and to its original *Dust*. And

As it is the *Soul's Entrance* into another World, and into a new way of existing.

When we fix our Thoughts seriously on any of these Representations of our *latter End*, we shall find several Things requisite and proper to be done, that we may die in Peace and Comfort. I shall therefore, in a summary Way, set the Duties before you

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210 *Preparation for leaving this World.*

that do more *peculiarly* belong to each of these Views of Death, in the Order in which they are here placed.

I. One of the Views of Death which strikes our Minds with Awe, and calls for a distinct Attention, is, The *leaving this World*, and *all Things* in it.

Whatever my Enjoyments are, and however useful or delightful my present Station may be, yet I am to look upon myself and all things about me as *passing away*. And whatever my Cares and Burdens, my Calamities and Sufferings are, I am to consider myself as *going from* them, and leaving the *whole Load* behind me, when I shall pass from hence, and be seen no more. He that dies in the Fear and Faith of God, will look both upon the *Good* and *Evil* things of this Life, with a Concern, that he may quit them as he ought to do, and as God requires he should.

A right Frame of Mind for thus taking *Leave* of the World includes several things.

1. There must be a grateful vindicating the *whole Conduct* of Providence toward us, and Thankfulness for all the *Blessings* and *Advantages* of Life God hath bestowed upon us.

It

It is every Way becoming and decent, at the close of Life, to recount the *Mercies* of God, and to glorify his Goodness toward us. To speak of Him as "the God" who fed us all our Life long, and by "whose Angel [with all his Ministers of Grace and Providence] we have been re-deemed from Evil."

If others *blame* any part of the Conduct of Providence toward us, as if we had not met with the *Rewards* our good Services and blameless useful Behaviour might have led one to expect; or as if our Mistakes and Faults had been more severely *punished* than those of others, who appear to have deserved much worse; yet in all that has befallen us we shall still acknowledge, that God is very just, and wise, and good, however Men may have carried it toward us, and however they may judge either of God or us.

It is a very proper and *handsome* Way of leaving a Country, where we have met with many kind Entertainments, and have been supported under great and pressing Difficulties, and have found some things that were counted *grievous* yet become a Means of after Peace and Honour, to take a *grateful* Notice of these Things. Thus we shall bid *Farewel* in a most engaging manner, and not fall under the Imputati-

212 Preparation for leaving this World.

ons of Rudeness, Moroseness, and Ingratitude.

2. A right Frame of Mind for leaving this Earth, includes *Penitence* for our ill Use of any *earthly Goods*, and doubly striving to make them as *serviceable* as may be to our *approaching Journey* at last.

As a *Steward*, that knows the Time is at Hand, when he must give up his *Stewardship*, will make all the Friends he can, and all the Advantages that his remaining Transactions for his LORD will allow; so should every *Christian* that is drawing off from the Affairs of this Life, "make to himself Friends [by his wise Applications of worldly Gains] that when these things fail, those Friends may receive him into everlasting Habitations."

When a *Journey* most important is near at Hand, and our Abode must be fixed in the Place to which we are going, every thing that can be safely remitted should be sent before us; and every thing that can be carried with us, for our Comfort and better Accommodation, should be ordered and wisely contrived to attend us; and every Friend that we expect to meet with Joy, and to have continually in our Society, we should endeavour to make as strict and delightful a Friendship with now, as all the Engage-

Engagements of Piety and Charity can amount to.

Our Repentance for losing so many *past Advantages* as we have had, must excite greater Vigour and Diligence in accomplishing those *Works* that shall follow us when we rest from our Labours. This will be further considered under the *second* Notion of Death.

3. The Notion of leaving this World should put us upon *actual Weaning* our Affections from it, and thinking of the many *grievous* and *troublesome* things that are in it.

Here we may sit down and ruminate upon the lamentable Uneasiness that arises from the Power of *Sin*; either in Conflicts, with *Temptation* to prevent it, or in the *Remorse*, and vexatious *Entanglements* that follow it. A Scene of so much Wickedness as this World is, and a Body of so much Corruption, as that which we now have, one would rather *long to leave*, than abide in.

We may think again of all the Troubles of Mind that arise from the *Ill-Spirits* that here we are mingled with. The bitter Envyings and open Strife of some; the deep Malice and Hatred of others: The Reproaches, Scorns, haughty Contempts, wrathful and angry Words, that oft wound

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our Souls: The *false* Pretensions of Friendship; or Fickleness and Inconstancy in those, that for a time are real and sincere; or unavoidable Separations, where there are the strongest and most sealed Affections: The many Hands of Enemies that are lifted up against us; and the secret Snares that are laid for us: The *Selfishness* that is ever scrambling for *this* Life, or conceitedly squabbling about the Faith that leads to the *next*: The innumerable *Disputes* that toss the Mind to and fro; the Tedioufness and Meanness of some of them, the Violence and Implacableness of others, the little good that arises from any, and the certain Hurt that is done by most of them: The Calamities that arise from *national* Struggles, and the clashing Views of Princes and Great Men: The perpetual Gratings of *Family* Quarrels, and ill Managements; and the restless Tumults that are occasioned by *personal* Disgusts and Disaffection: These are things, that make the Thoughts of leaving this World very easy, when the Mind is adverting to them.

We may think again, of the Pains and Distempers to which our *Bodies* are subject; the dull; and stupid, and uneasy Hours they occasion to us; and sometimes the violent Appetites; and enflamed Passions, and distorted Fancies, and wild Imaginations, by which they confound and hurry away our Thoughts:

Thoughts : The Usage also these Bodies are subject to, from the Passions, Distempers, and Follies of others : These, and such like things, make a Departure hence no very sorrowful Matter.

We may further think of the Rapines, Plunders, and Loss of the *several Comforts* of Life, to which we are liable. Estates, and Houses, and Relations, and even the Necessaries for subsisting our selves and Families, are all *loseable* things : And these Losses may be so aggravated, as to be worse than Death : The Thoughts of such miserable Poverty and Want, may render us willing to leave a State of so great and continual Danger.

In the midst of all these Calamities, Troubles, and Fears, *We* may possibly be as much the Occasion of Evil to others, and may stand as much in their Way, or give as great Disgust and Uneasiness to them, as They do to us. And by dwelling humbly and seriously upon this Thought, we may be as willing to *withdraw* from a State where we our selves are become offensive, as from those things that are grievous and offensive to us.

To close this Particular ; we should make that Use of every thing that is an Occasion of Sin, or Temptation, Trouble or Affliction, Fear or Danger, giving or taking Offence, as to get our Hearts and Thoughts
more

216 *Preparation for leaving this World.*

more *weaned* from this World, and ready to part with it.

4. A right Frame of Mind for leaving the World, will put us upon *disposing our Affairs* in the best manner we can, for the *Good of Those* we are to leave behind us.

When we go to the Place from whence we shall not return, all just *Debts* should be paid, and all Accounts settled. We should leave nothing as a *Bone of Contention*, to destroy the Peace and good Understanding of Those, who we desire should be good and serious, and united, by our Death.

We should settle every thing in the most equitable manner we can by *Will*, where former Covenants, or the Laws of our Country are not sufficient: And where they are sufficient, our Wills should be governed by them; and if we have Ability, our *last Works* should be the *best* in a way of *Charity*.

We should endeavour to be as just and charitable in the *last Disposal* of our Affairs; as ever we have thought it our Duty to be before. And if we are conscious of *sinful Neglects* before, we should study to make the best Retributions that lie in our Power.

Thus should our Duty to God, and our fellow-Creatures, direct our last *Settlement* of things, as well as the constant Management

ment of our Selves and our Substance throughout Life,

5. A right Frame of Mind in leaving this World, will teach us to take our last Farewel with Kindness, and not as if we grudged any thing to Those that we leave behind.

As we should glorify God for all the Blessings bestowed on us, so we must shew all manner of Good-Will to Men: Not grieving to put our Substance into the Possession of others; but contriving to dispose of it in the most prudent Manner we can; and wishing a Blessing may accompany it, wherever we see fit to leave it.

Those who go out of the World in low and distressed Circumstances, notwithstanding all their Care and Industry, to provide for such as belong to them, should seriously commit the *Survivors* to that Providence which hath seen fit so to order things; and encourage them to trust in him who hath said, "Leave thy fatherless Children with me, I will preserve them alive; and They that fear the LORD shall not want any good thing."

The second View and Notion of Death is, its finishing our State of Trial, and sealing our Characters.

Preparation for Death in this view of it, takes in the following Particulars.

1. A *redeeming Time* from every thing *hurtful* or *useless*, to improve it in something that shall *daily* turn to *account*.

Not reading those *Books*, nor delighting in that *Company*, nor indulging to those *Pastimes*, that would carry us from any one Branch of *sober, righteous, and godly Life*: But whatever our Hand finds to do, (for God, for the good of *others*, or for our *own Souls*;) doing it with all our might; because there is *no Work, nor Device* in the *Grave*, whither we are going.

He that looks upon his present State as a State of *Probation*, and that nothing can be added or taken away from his Character, when Death has once set the *Seal* to it, cannot allow himself to *sin* or *trifle* away his Time.

There can be no right Government or Possession of our *selves*, without securing Time to *commune with our own Hearts*; no practising the Rules of Righteousness to *others*, without careful timing our Transactions with them; nor is it possible to discharge the Duties of *Godliness*, without redeeming Time from other Things, to think of God and his Providence, to worship him, and to keep up a constant Attention to him, and Observance of him.

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That Person can have no great or regular Concern about these things, that is at a Loss how to spend his Time.

2. Preparation for Death, as it ends our State of Trial, consists in making our *best* of all the *Seasons* and *Means* of *Grace*.

We should read, and hear, and pray, and worship God, and attend the holy Institutions of our Religion, as those that know Eternity depends upon the Use we make of these Advantages. That as these leave us, Judgment will be passed upon us. That no farther Opportunity or Seasons for acquainting ourselves with God, and seeking his Favour, and entring into Covenant with him, will be granted us after this Life is ended.

Therefore whatever is proposed to be done for our Souls, by the Exercises of Devotion, or the Offices of our holy Religion, should be attended to, and followed after with all Diligence, however Men of profane, sensual, and worldly Spirits, may neglect or abuse such Converses with invisible and eternal Things.

3. As Death seals our Characters, it is one very good Preparation for it, to *make up all Breaches*, and *repair all Injuries* we have done, to the utmost of our Power.

If we are not to offer a *Gift* which is brought to God's Altar, before we are reconciled to an offended Brother; and if we are not to look for the Acceptance of any Prayer, without forgiving the Trespases of others, that God may also forgive our Trespases; certainly we cannot appear with Safety before God's Bar, nor obtain an honourable Character either in this or the other World, if we go hence in a State of Enmity with any of our fellow-Creatures, or under the Guilt of known and allowed Wrongs and Damages.

We should endeavour to clear our selves from all Imputations of Dishonesty, and should express all Charity and Forgiveness to all about us, and to the whole World, when we come to an end of that Part which we have to act on this Earth.

4. As Death declareth and fixeth our Character, we should *prepare* for it by closing with every Opportunity that offers for *accomplishing* any *useful* and *valuable* *Work*.

Such Works as tend to promote the Honour of Religion, and the true Worship of God, in Opposition to Infidelity on one Hand, and human Impositions, Idolatries, and Superstitions on the other Hand, are great Advantages to a Man's Character.

So are also Works of eminent Service to the Publick, and to any Societies of Men that are engaged in *reforming*, and *instructing*, and bettering the World.

Legacies to poor Relations, Bounty to poor Children, and to Families that are ready to perish, and to the Sick, and Aged; and all pious Benefactions and Endowments, for the Encouragement of good and beneficial Undertakings, and for the Relief of the Helpless or Oppressed, tend to make a Character and Memory blessed.

Writing and dispersing *useful Books*, that may promote humane and social Virtues and all the Exercises of Piety, after our Heads are laid in the Dust, and our Faces forgotten amongst Men, are good Ways of improving this State of Trial, and advancing our Characters, and our future Rewards. If a Sinner be converted by such Books, and Heaven be joyful at such Conversions, surely the *Authors* and *Spreaders* of them must have some Share in that Joy.

5. To look upon Death as finishing a State of Trial, our Preparation for it very much consists, in *settling the Evidences* of our *Justification* in the sight of God.

This leads us to consider carefully the *Doctrine* of Justification by JESUS CHRIST; and to lay together the Proofs of our having that *Righteousness by Faith*, which is of God,
and

and which will render us acceptable in his Sight.

After we have done our *best*, we are still to look upon ourselves as *unprofitable Servants*. "We are justified freely by God's Grace, through the Redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST.

But if we can say that we believe in Christ, according to the Gospel; and that the *Enmity* which is in our fallen corrupted Nature to the *Holiness* and *Government* of God, hath been slain by a Redeemer's Cross: If we can say that we have known the Power of divine Grace, and of a renewing Spirit, in giving us a *new Heart*, and a *new Spirit*: If we can say, that God hath so put his *Fear* into our Hearts, that notwithstanding many Falls, and sinful Imperfections, yet we have not *wickedly departed* from our God, nor cast off his *Yoke*, and the Bonds of his *Covenant*: If we can say that God hath so written his *Laws* in our *inward Parts*, that they have been always present with us, and powerful, either to prevent our falling into Iniquity, or to bring us to Repentance afterward, and to make us walk more humbly and carefully with our God: In short, if we can say that in Simplicity, and with a *godlike Sincerity*, we have had our Conversation in this World, and that our Souls have still been *tending* toward God as their main End: We have

have then good Ground to hope, that our State of Trial will end in the Approbations of infinite Mercy and Goodness; and our *Characters* shall be declared and fixed, by the Great Judge of quick and dead, so as to remain honourable and glorious for ever.

I find a good Man upon the Views of Death, as *finishing* the State of Trial, comforting himself after the manner following.

“ O weak, and fearful Soul! why shouldst thou draw back as if the Promises of God, or thy Acceptance with him, were left doubtful?—Hast thou not the Witness in thy self, in the Difference God hath already made betwixt Thee and Others? Is it no Work of Christ’s Spirit that hath made thee to differ? Overlook not the Case of the miserable World, even of thy sinful Neighbours, who in the midst of Light still live in Darkness;” and under the same Instructions, and common Mercies, or Judgments with thy self, yet live in all manner of Disorders, and walk in the *Vanity of their Minds*. If thou art *taught* better things, and enabled to *mind* them, and thy Heart is *fixed* for Religion in spite of the Infidelity and Immorality of others, don’t impute this Difference to *thy self*, which evidently shews a divine Agency and Power. “ Overvalue not corrupted Nature: It bringeth forth no such Fruit as this. If thou doubt of that,
“ Remember

" Remember what thou wast in an Hour
 " of Temptation, even poor weak Temp-
 " tations, when God hath left thee to thy
 " self. How small Matter hath then drawn
 " thee into Sin! Must not then all the
 " Graces that are wrought in thee, and that
 " are practised by thee, be thankfully ascribed
 " to a divine Spirit? And will not that most
 " good, and wise, and powerful Agent, per-
 " fect his own Work? Thou hast nothing to
 " boast of, and much to be humbled for;
 " but thou hast also much to be thankful
 " for.

" Thy *holy* Desires are alas! too weak,
 " but they are *holy*. Thy *Love* hath been
 " too cold, but yet thou hast *loved* the
 " most holy God" [and delighted in the
 " Beauties of *Holiness*.] " Thy *Hopes* in God
 " have been too low; but it is God thou
 " hast *hoped in*, and his Love and Glory
 " that thou hast hoped for. Thy *Prayers*
 " have been too dull and interrupted, but it
 " is *Holiness* and *Heaven* that thou hast
 " *most prayed* for. Thy *Labours* and En-
 " deavours have been too slothful, but it
 " is God, and Glory, and the Good of Man-
 " kind that thou hast laboured for. Tho'
 " thy *Motions* were too weak and slow,
 " yet they were advancing toward God,
 " and therefore must come from God as
 " their Original."

In

In such a Way as this we may trust God to make the best of our *Characters*, when "being justified by his Grace, we are made *Heirs* according to the Hope of eternal *Life*."

The *third* principal View and Notion of Death is, its turning the *Body* to *Corruption*, and reducing it to the *Dust* out of which it was first made.

A most sad and terrible Prospect of Death, this is; and what cannot become *tolerable* without a close and frequent Attention to the present Nature of Things; and a humble Submission, to bear this as the Punishment of Sin; together with a Hope of Victory, and of a future Resurrection through JESUS CHRIST.

To look upon Death, therefore, as *corrupting* our *Bodies* in a *Grave*, our Preparation for it consists in the following Particulars.

1. In observing, that *Dissolution* is natural to all material things.

All the Particles of Matter are moveable, and liable to continual Alterations in their Connexion and Situation. When we consider how much Matter flies off from these Bodies every Day, and how much new Matter is added by what we eat and drink

to make good all Wastes, and to supply what is lost to us, we have great Reason to admire the Wisdom and Goodness of Providence, that such a *Frame* is kept in order so long as it is. Especially, considering the innumerable *Casualties*, and *Distempers*, which continually threaten us, and from which we have no sufficient Power or Skill to preserve our selves.

The more we think in this way, the more *familiar* will the Thoughts of a *Dissolution* be to us, and the more Reason shall we see to live in the daily Expectation of it. For what is our Life, but as *Grass*, or as a Flower, that *soon* and sometimes *suddenly* withers; or as a *Vapour*, that quickly *vanisheth* away?

In the present State of things, to be dissolved is a *Debt we owe to Nature*; and in paying or discharging it, we must take *our Lot* with all other perishing and corruptible Things.

2. Preparation for Death in this View of it, will lead us to enquire concerning *the Cause* of this Dissolution becoming so *painful* and *terrible*, and its going so far as utterly to consume the Body, and turn it to Dust.

Though a Body composed of such Materials as this World affords, and made with such corrupting wasting Parts as a human
Body

Body is, could not in the very Nature of Things be supposed to *last always*; yet it might doubtless, be made to last much longer than now it commonly doth; or it might be renewed and refined, or the Soul separated from it, without those terrible Sickneses and Pains that generally lead to its Dissolution. What Account can be given of these, and of the Horror that they produce in *us*, more than in any other Creatures that undergo the same Change?

No doubt, this must arise from some high Displeasure given to our *Maker*; some Iniquity or Rebellion, that is by this means to be *punished* and made odious to us. This is the very Case. "By one Man *Sin* entered into the World, and *Death* by *Sin*; and so Death passeth upon all Men, for that All have sinned." It was for the *Sin* of Man that this Sentence passed upon him, "Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return."

The Increase of *Sin* in the World hath also increased the *Pains* that lead to Death, and very much *hastened* the Stroke of it. Therefore when *Moses* addresseth God on the sad Occasion of reducing the Term of human Life to *threescore Years and ten*; he thus maketh Confession, "We are consumed by thine Anger, and by thy Wrath are we troubled: Thou hast set our Ini-

"quities before Thee, our secret Sins in the
"Light of thy Countenance."

In this View of Death, we must prepare for it by sincerely *Repenting* of all our Sins, according to the Account of Repentance before given *. And then with lowliest Submissions, we should yield to the righteous Sentence of a justly displeased God, and say, "I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him: But though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

3. Preparation for Death in this View will therefore lead us, To cast away all *Pride* of these Bodies, and *sinful Indulgence* of them, and all *anxious Care* about providing for them.

To be proud of *Corruption*; to pamper and *cherish* too highly, that which will turn our Fondness into *Stings*; and the more it has been *indulged*, the more it will aggravate after-*Pain*; is so great a Folly and Inconsistency, that nothing but a keeping of Death out of Sight could account for it. He that will best prepare for Death, must least indulge or pride himself in the *Body*.

He must also cast off all eager Affection to bodily Enjoyments, and anxious Care to lay in for them. Otherwise, a Soul that

* See p. 170, &c.

abandons

abandons itself to cater for the Body, and has its Understanding and Relishes debas'd, by perpetually minding those things that are only within the Sphere of the Body, lays a sure Foundation for lasting and extreme Misery when it comes to be *torn away, for ever torn away*, and banished from this World of Bodies.

4. When we look to a *sinking perishing Body*, we should *exercise Faith in a dying Saviour*; and apply to him to take away the *Sting and Terror of Death*.

Our blessed Saviour not only *took a human Body* for our sakes, but he *resigned it* also to Death and the Grave, that he might make Both safe and easy to us. We are therefore directed to look for the Remission of Sins *through his Blood*. He procured for us a *new Covenant*, which is a Covenant of Life and Peace, that by this means we being brought unto God through him, may not *perish*, but have everlasting Life. He did Honour to the divine Law and Government, by *fulfilling all Righteousness*, and shewing *all Subjection* even unto Death. Thus he became a *Propitiation* for us, making his *Soul* an offering for Sin, and bearing also the Punishment of our Sins in his *own Body* on the Tree.

He was buried, and went down into the Grave, the House appointed for all living,
that

that he might make it a Bed of Peace and Rest to all his faithful Followers. He was sealed up in a Sepulchre, to intimate that it should be indeed a *safe Repository* to the Bodies of all his dying Members. And that he might also *open the Grave*, in spite of all its Fastenings, and might come forth, shewing that a dead Body could be brought to Life again, and to assure us that *our Bodies* should be raised with *His*; He rising as the *First-Fruits*, and afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Look to JESUS, O my Soul! " who for
 " the Suffering of Death, was crowned
 " with Glory and Honour. He took our
 " Flesh and Blood, that through Death,
 " He might destroy him that had the
 " Power of Death, that is the Devil, and
 " deliver them, who through Fear of
 " Death were all their Life-time subject to
 " Bondage." Look unto him and be saved;
 look unto him and be encouraged to go
 down with him into the Mansions of the
 Dead; commit thy Dust to his Care, and
 take all the *Pains* of a dissolving Tabernacle
 with Patience; and by a steddy Faith in a
 Redeemer, take Heart and say, " O Death
 " where is thy Sting? O Grave where is
 " thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin,
 " and the Strength of Sin is the Law: But
 " thanks be to God which giveth us the
 " Victory thro' our Lord JESUS CHRIST."

5. To prepare for giving up this Body to *Corruption*, we should dwell much upon the Descriptions of its *future Advancement and Glory*.

If we suffer with CHRIST, we shall also be *glorified* together with him; and the *glorious Body* of Christ, will be the Pattern to which all *those Bodies* shall be conformed, that shall be owned as his Purchase at the Resurrection of the Just.

Those Bodies will have different *Degrees* of Glory, according to their present Degrees of Purity and Usefulness. And they shall have different *Mansions* assigned them, nearer to a Redeemer's Throne, or more distant from it, according to their serving more or less the great Purposes of God's setting up a Kingdom amongst Men.

They that have acted in their Bodies whilst mortal, so as to draw a Number of other Bodies to devote themselves to God and Christ here on Earth, are said to have these Converts attending them when they become immortal Bodies. St. Paul's Faith could place such around him, as his Joy and his Crown. One of those Mansions, that are prepared by Christ for our Reception, in his Father's spacious House in the Heavens, may be large enough, for many glorified Bodies to act with or under one eminently glorious Body; to whose Labours,
and

and Sufferings, and Devotions, and good Example, those *many* might be first or principally indebted in this earthly Life. It may be said, perhaps, in this Sense, "They that turn many to Righteousness shall shine as the Stars, and some as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father." Where all shall be Humility, and Wisdom, and Goodness itself, there will be no Backwardness to acknowledge Those from whom we have received any *real Good*. But first referring all to him that sits upon the *Throne*, and crying *Grace, Grace*; next, every glorified Body will acknowledge the Light it borrows from any other Body under God and Christ. And thus, as one Star differs from another Star in Glory; so, at the Resurrection of the Dead, many shining Bodies of different Lustre, may go to fill up one *Mansion*, or to make one glorious *Constellation* in those blissful Regions.

But one thing we are assured of, as to *All* the Bodies of just Men at the Resurrection, That they shall be raised from *Corruption, Dishonour, and Weakness*, to *Incorruption, Glory, and Power*. Their present Nature, and all that is suited merely to an *animal* Life, as the present Life is, will pass away; and their Refinement be so great, as to become *spiritual* Bodies, and like the *Angels* or Messengers of the upper World.

Such Thoughts as these on the State of glorified Bodies, which the Scriptures lead us to, are good Preparations for our yielding this Flesh to Dust and Corruption. It is that the very Seeds of Mortality, and Sin may be destroyed, and that the Body may rise again pure, honourable, and immortal.

The fourth View of Death, is, the Soul's Entrance into a new World, and upon a new way of existing.

Our Preparation for it thus considered, consisteth, in searching diligently the Account which our Revelations from the other World afford, concerning the endless Existence of Thinking Beings in the Regions above us:

Their Appointment to several Stations, and Employments, and to all the Advantages of Society, and Order:

The Assurance we have, that good Spirits, when they leave these Bodies, are immediately added to the Society of Those that inhabit the Place which our Saviour calls *Paradise*:

And that, it is really better for a Soul to depart and be with Christ, than to dwell in this Body.

After our Minds are acquainted with, and settled in a sound and thorough Belief of these things, we shall have our Hearts

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very

234 *Preparation for another World.*

very much in that World to which we are going, and shall be daily studying to *suit* ourselves to it: And when the *Hour* of our Departure comes, we shall willingly breathe out our Souls into the Hands and Custody of our blessed LORD.

It would not suit with the Brevity here proposed, to discourse on those things that are said concerning the *invisible World*, and the State of *separate Souls* there, or of their *Employments* and *Entertainments*. That would lead me to begin a new Treatise, and to write of the great Business and Concerns of *another Life*, while I only proposed to shew what our Duty is in this *present Life*. Let us now only conceive of our selves, as *actually* called to enter with all our Capacities of thinking into a *new Scene* of things, and a *new way* of using our intellectual Powers, and that will put us upon these following Preparations.

1. To be in all the Dispositions of *Care*; and *Humility*, and *Expectation*, that are proper to attend us in our Appearance before the great *Ruler* of the invisible World.

After Death, the Soul must *immediately* appear before its Judge, and from him shall receive a *Commitment*, to go to the Place prepared for it during the Delay of the last general Judgment. By the Society to which it is consigned, and the Misery or Comfort

Comfort it finds in itself, and in the State and Place where it is, it well knows what shall be its Doom at the Great Judgment-Day.

So that to take the *first Trial* when a Soul quits the Body, requires an actual Order and Settlement of Things, a diligent Expectance, and Composure, and Decency of Spirit, suited to so important a Concern; though our most solemn Trial, and the most awful magnificent Appearance of our Judge, will be at the end of the World.

2. We should *keep* our Thoughts and Affections steddily fixed on *Things above*, as those that are daily passing to them.

We should live in the very Spirit and Temper of *Passengers*, that are waiting only for a proper Conveyance or a fair Wind, to carry them to some Place, where Riches, and Pleasures, and Friends, are waiting for them; and where they have a Prospect of all manner of Happiness. "If then ye be
"risen with Christ, seek those things that
"are above, where Christ sitteth at the right
"Hand of God."

There are *Treasures* "that neither Moth
"nor Rust can corrupt, nor Thieves break
"through and steal:" Treasures that never waste, nor can ever fall, or fly away from us. There are *Honours* that have nothing to *blemish* or *cloud* them; nothing to excite Envy, or expose us to Danger; nothing to *forfeit*

236 *Preparation for another World.*

them, or to make us *once* fear their being taken from us. The Crowns and Titles we shall there receive, are not for a short and uncertain Life, and then to be left to others; but they are Crowns of *Life*, and of everlasting Duration. There are *Pleasures* without Pollution, and without Decay: That have no Restraint in the Enjoyment, no Remorse in the after Views and Consequences of them, nor any thing to create ensuing Damps and Disgusts. They are Pleasures for evermore.

To read, and talk, and meditate on these things, is a delightful Preparative to our Entry into the Joy of our LORD.

3. To prepare for Death in this View of it, we must be continually exercising our selves in those *Employments*, that are most suited to the *Employments of Heaven*,

This should put us upon the most heavenly Use of our *thinking Powers*, and upon all the Exercises of *Humility, Contentment, Constancy, and Self-Possession*.

This should make us delight in all Acts of *Righteousness*, and *Charity*, and *relative Goodness*, and *Gratitude*, and *Peace*; since we look for all These in the heavenly State, to the utmost Perfection.

And we should inure our selves to *contemplate* the Perfections, and Works of GOD; to be much in Acts of *Worship*, and in *imitating*

imitating the Being we worship; to practise all the Duties of *Resignation*, and submissive Yieldings to the whole Will of God; and to *delight* and *trust* in him, and be *faithful* to him, as all Those blessed Spirits are, and do, that surround his Throne.

Seeing the heavenly Happiness doth wholly consist in such things as these, the nearer we approach to it, the more should we employ ourselves as the Inhabitants of Heaven do, striving after their Perfection.

Lastly, Our Souls being thus *ready*, we have nothing to do at the Moment of their Departure, but to *commit them* by an actual Surrender to the *Mercy* and Disposal of a wise and good God.

If the Distemper that finishes Life will admit of any regular Thoughts, at the *Time* of our *expiring*, we should breathe out our Souls in some such Language as that of our Saviour; "Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit." Or, by an Eye of Faith, looking to Jesus who stands ready to receive the Souls he hath purchased, we may say, with *Stephen*, "Lord Jesus receive my Spirit."

"O God that gave me this Soul! the
"great Father of Spirits! have Compassion
"on thine own Off-spring." "O Jesus,
"the great Lover and Saviour of Souls!
"who hast purchased Life, and Peace, and
"Heaven

238 *Preparation for another World.*

“ Heaven for them, and who hast made
 “ *my Soul* a chosen willing Subject to thee,
 “ Remember me in thy Kingdom !” “ O
 “ holy and blessed Spirit of Grace ! who
 “ hast *enlightened* this Soul of mine, and
 “ drawn it by *Cords of Love*, and hast turned
 “ it from Sin and this World, to God and
 “ Heaven,” “ Assist its present Motions to-
 “ ward the Regions of Life, Light, and
 “ Love. Now let thy Consolations abound,
 “ and all thy Graces be in their proper Ex-
 “ ercise, that I may finish well, and may
 “ have an *abundant Entrance* administered to
 “ me into the *Joy of my LORD.*”

“ Into thine Hand I commit my Spirit :
 “ Thou hast redeemed me, O LORD GOD
 “ of Truth !”

If our last Distemper should take away the Organs of Sense, and render us incapable of thus giving up our Souls to God, by our *own actual* Surrender; we should beforehand engage some pious Relation, or intimate Friend to do it for us. Or at least engage them to send for some *Minister*, who may most seriously perform this last Office for our departing Spirits. Those that have had the Care of us, and have known our Concern to walk in the Fear of God, and to be always ready for Death, will take great Satisfaction in committing those Souls they have been serving upon Earth, to the Perfection and Salvation of Heaven. And

tho'

tho' the *Prayers* of a *Minister* cannot alter the State of an *impenitent* Soul, when dying under the Power of Sin ; yet they may afford some help to Them that die in Faith ; and may procure some Communications of Grace from above, to lighten the Passage into Eternity, when the Soul was before prepared for a comfortable *Abode* there.

To close all ; we should inure ourselves *every Night*, when we fall asleep, and sink into a Posture of Death, to *commend* our *Spirits* to the merciful and watchful Care of God. This will make it habitual, and we shall readily practise it, when we come to sleep the Sleep of Death.

“ O most gracious and powerful *Interces-*
“ *for !* by whose Prayer the Faith of thine
“ Apostle *Peter* was preserved, when *Satan*
“ desired to have him that he might sift
“ him as Wheat ; Pray for my Soul, and
“ stand by it in its *last Conflicts*, that my
“ *Faith fail not*. But when my Flesh and
“ my Heart fail, Be Thou, O my God !
“ the Strength of my Heart and my Portion
“ for ever.

F I N I S.

Errors to be corrected.

PAGE 18. l. 4. from the Bottom, f. him, r. off him.
 P. 39. l. 6. from the Bottom, f. Th. r. them.
 P. 111. l. 4. from the Top, f. for the.
 P. 123. l. 6. from the Bottom, f. Modesty or Submission.
 P. 139. l. 1. f. Dutie, r. Duties.
 P. 148. l. 7. from the Bottom, f. uttering, r. offering.
 P. 158. l. 16. f. Settlement, r. Scheme or Model.
 P. 159. l. 3. r. of the Divine.
 P. 168. l. 3. blot out the first no.
 Ibid. l. 11. f. Him, r. God.
 P. 176. Standing, Bowing, or Kneeling, should be put in one Line.
 P. 183. l. 8. from the Bottom, f. no, r. nor.
 P. 216. l. 5. from the Bottom, f. Receptions, r. Repositions.



1111